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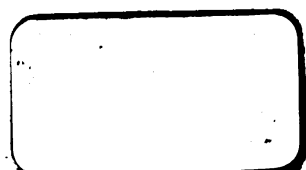
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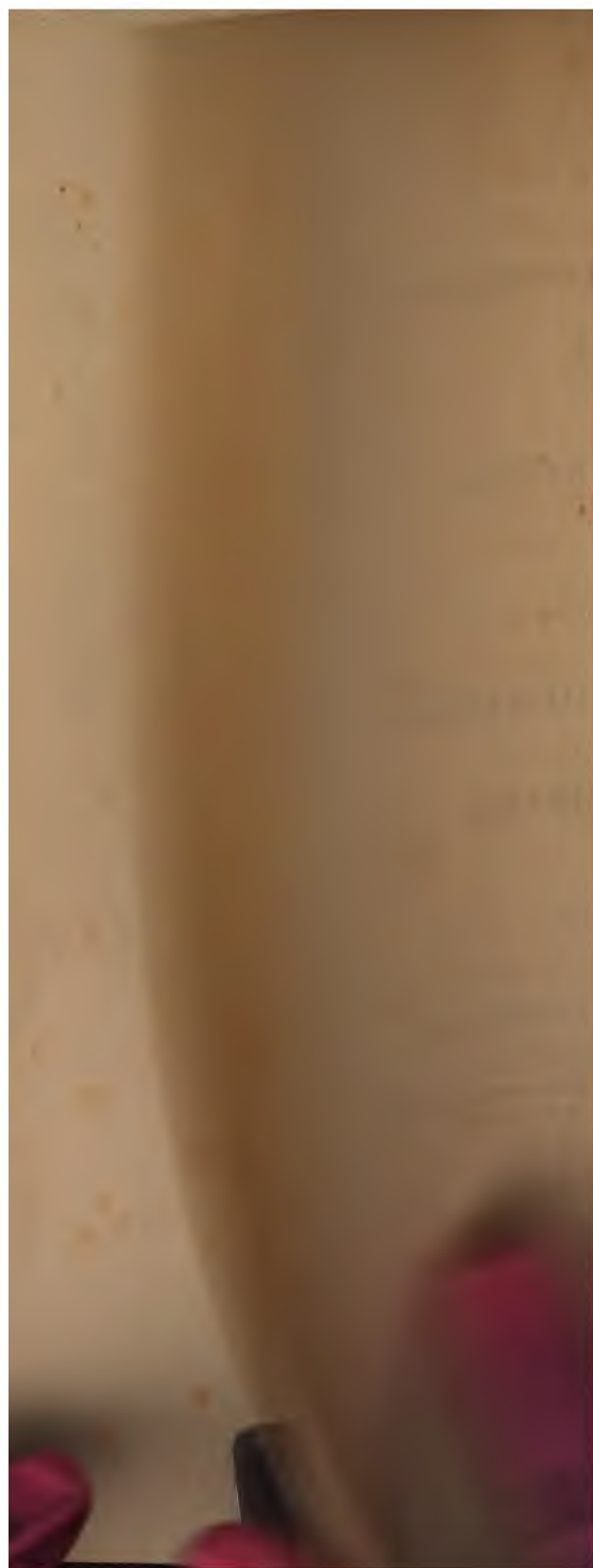


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THE
PROPHETICAL CHARACTER
AND
INSPIRATION
OF
THE APOCALYPSE
CONSIDERED.



BY
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CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED AT THE FITT PRESS, BY JOHN SMITH,
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY.

LONDON:

JOHN WILLIAM PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXV.

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ERRATA.

PAGE	LINE	ERROR.	CORRECTION.
24.	19.	was	were
37.	17.	<i>dele</i> therefore.	
70.	25.	his	the
214. note.		Hebrews	Hebrew
254. note.		Rev. xiii. 8.	Rev. xiii. 3.
318.	10.	the trials	the description of the trials
335.	19.	full stop	semicolon

P R E F A C E.

IN considering in what manner I might best discharge the duty, which is imposed upon me by the office which I have the honour to hold in the University, of producing annually, during my tenure of that office, some work in defence, either of the doctrines or the evidences of Revealed Religion, it occurred to me, that the attacks which have been directed by avowed Infidels against the divine authority and the inspiration of the Apocalypse, as well as the mistaken views, with respect to its prophetical character, which prevail amongst many sincere Christians, made it a subject peculiarly proper for an official publication. And this impression was strengthened by the consideration of the general circumstances of the Christian world at the present time, and of this country in particular; which appeared, in an especial manner, to direct the attention of Christians in general to this important prophecy.

In order, however, that I may justify myself from the charge of presumption, or of having taken up hasty views on this important subject, I feel it to be due to myself, and to those who may be led to a perusal of this work, to state the grounds, on

which I have been led to the formation of my opinion; and to the adoption of the principles, on which this exposition of the doctrines and prophetical character of the Apocalypse is founded.

The principles of interpretation, which have been adopted in this work, are, in the main, those which have been adopted by Vitranga and Dean Woodhouse. Circumstances, which it is not necessary now to mention, led me some years ago to the perusal of the work of the late Dean Woodhouse on this subject, which was published by him in the year 1805¹, at the time when he was Canon Residentiary of Lichfield and Archdeacon of Salop in that Diocese. The principles, upon which the learned writer proceeds in this work, (to which, and to the preparatory studies connected with it, he devoted the attention of twelve years,) in his exposition of this important prophecy, appeared at once so satisfactory; and to throw so clear a light over the Apocalypse, considered as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy, and particularly as *the great prophecy of the Christian dispensation*; that, whatever difficulty might exist with regard to the interpretation of *particular prophecies*, the main object of the apocalyptic prophecies appeared to be clear and decisive; namely, that which has been the great and leading subject of prophecy

¹ This work is entitled, *The Apocalypse, or Revelation of Saint John, translated; with Notes Critical and Explanatory*; by JOHN CHAPPEL

WOODHOUSE, M. A., *Archdeacon of Salop in the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry*. Hatchard. 1805.

from the beginning,—THE REDEEMER AND HIS EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

In the year 1828, the learned writer, who, shortly after the publication of his first work, was elevated to the Deanery of Lichfield, in consequence of a suggestion made to him in the year 1818 by the present venerable and learned Bishop of Durham, at that time Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, published an abridgment of his former work². This work, however, though in some respects it may be called an *abridgment* of the preceding, was, at the suggestion of the Right Reverend Prelate, enriched with much additional valuable matter. In particular, it contains, with reference to the most important subjects contained in this prophecy, a candid and dispassionate view of the opinions of the most eminent writers on the Apocalypse; so that the reader may view them in connection with each other: and thus it affords us the means of forming the best and most impartial judgment, not only with respect to the interpretation of particular prophecies, but of the general scope and object of the Apocalypse. But what renders it more especially valuable, is, that it contains the last and most deliberate statement of the opinions of this

² This work is entitled, *Annotations on the Apocalypse. Intended as a sequel to those of Mr Elsley on the Gospels, and of Mr Prebendary Slade on the Epistles; and thus to complete*

a series of comments on the whole of the New Testament, for the use of Students in prophetic Scripture.—Hatchard. 1828.

learned writer. For the last work was published twenty-three years after the former, and under circumstances, which led him to a new and careful investigation of the whole subject; and was, moreover, undertaken by him at a time of life, when the mind, unfettered by hypothesis, is more intent upon the acquisition of truth; and, with eternity in view, is most likely to acquiesce in those views of the divine economy of providence and redemption, which harmonize best with the great doctrines of the Gospel; and with the sublimity and grandeur of the Almighty plans for the everlasting happiness and salvation of man.

The great principle, on which Dean Woodhouse has proceeded in his exposition of the Apocalypse, is by considering it as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy; and as having mainly in view *that*, which is the great object of all prophecy, *the history of the Church of God*. With respect, therefore, to the language, the symbols, the object, and the interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies, he justly argues, that they ought to be in perfect harmony with the prophecies of the former dispensations: and on these grounds he has laid down the following principles, by which he has guided himself in the interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

1. The first principle, which he laid down for this investigation, was, that, if the same divine

Spirit, which dictated the preceding prophecies, were also the Inspirer of the apocalyptic visions, a mutual relation must subsist between them; *and, therefore, we ought to compare the language, the symbols, the predictions of the Apocalypse with those of former revelations; and to admit only such interpretation as should appear to have the sanction of this divine authority.*

2. The second principle was, that, *unless the language and symbols of the Apocalypse should in particular passages direct, or evidently require another mode of application, the predictions were to be applied to events occurring in the progressive kingdom of Christ.*

3. The third principle was, that *as the kingdom of Christ, the object of the apocalyptic prophecies, is spiritual, so they are to be understood in a spiritual sense. Spiritual things are to be compared with spiritual, as says St Paul, (1 Cor. ii. 13.)*

4. The last principle, which was adopted by this learned writer in the interpretation of the apocalyptic prophecies, was, *not to attempt the particular explanation of those prophecies which remain yet to be fulfilled.*

These were the sound and judicious principles, on which Dean Woodhouse proceeded in the investigation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse: and no one, who has perused and studied his

valuable works, can fail to appreciate the sound judgment, the eminent learning, and the deliberate caution, with which he has applied them to the interpretation of this difficult book. That his first work, at the time of its publication, did not attract the attention, which its intrinsic excellence deserved, is perhaps, in a great measure, to be accounted for from the fact,—that the minds of men were at that time intent upon the great changes in the political and religious condition of the civilized world, which had been effected, and were then taking place in consequence of the French revolution. But perhaps a more just view of the Apocalypse, in connection with the prophecies of former dispensations and with the great scheme of Scripture prophecy, will lead us to a different view of this sublime and magnificent prophecy; and will teach us to look for the accomplishment of its predictions, in events which are on a scale of magnificence, corresponding to that, which is the great subject of all prophecy,—the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom.

The work of Dean Woodhouse, however, did not entirely escape the reward of approbation, which was so richly its due. Amongst other persons, the late learned and venerable Bishop HURD,—who, of all men living at that time, was best able to appreciate the real merits of such a work; and who at a former period of life had not only espoused, but in his valuable *Lectures on Prophecy*, had argued

in support of the system of Mede,—has recorded his favourable opinion of the principles, on which Dean Woodhouse has founded his exposition of the Apocalypse¹. This testimony, coming from a person of such distinguished learning, who was so eminently qualified to pronounce an opinion on such a subject, will carry great weight with all persons, in influencing the judgment which they may form with respect to the work of Dean Woodhouse; and to the principles, which constitute the basis of his exposition of this book.

It is no derogation from the merits of this writer, that, in the great and leading principles which he has adopted in the interpretation of this prophecy, he has been anticipated by Vitringa; because Dean Woodhouse commenced and carried on his work in a great degree independently of the work of Vitringa; and indeed, as he states, of the help of all former commentators. With regard, indeed, to the merits of Vitringa as an expositor of the Apocalypse, no person can have perused the work of Vitringa, without appreciating the evidence, which it carries with it, of

¹ This testimony is contained in a copy of this book in the Library of Hartlebury Castle, which the Bishop bequeathed to his successors in the See, and is thus written by his Lordship's own hand:

"This is the best book of the kind that I have seen; it owes its superiority to two things. 1. The author's understanding, for the most part, the apoca-

lyptic *symbols*, in a spiritual, not a literal sense. 2. To the care which he has taken to fix the precise *import* of those symbols, from the use made of them by the old prophetic, and other writers of the Old and New Testament. Still, many difficulties remain, and will remain, to the time of the end.

March 15, 1806.

R. W."

his extensive learning, his just comprehension of the true character of the language, the spirit, and the object of Scripture prophecy; and, above all, the tone of deep and unaffected piety which pervades the whole work. It is peculiarly valuable, also, as presenting a copious view of the principal opinions which had been propounded by preceding writers of the Apocalypse; and particularly of those which are connected with the prophecies relating to Papal Rome.

The principles, which have been explained and upheld with so much ability by these learned writers, form the chief authorities by which the author has been guided in the consideration of the *prophetical character* of the Apocalypse. Without servilely following either of them, I have felt confidence in the direction of such valuable guides; and whenever I have differed from them, it has been with great diffidence: but, with regard to the *great principles*, on which these writers have founded their views of the apocalyptic prophecies, it has been my great object to maintain and uphold them.

After this explanation of the principles, by which I have been guided in my view of the apocalyptic prophecies, I will state briefly the plan which has been adopted by me in the following work.

The *first* chapter contains a brief sketch of the principal arguments for the *Authenticity and Ca-*

nonical Authority of the Apocalypse. In the *second* chapter, an attempt is made to investigate *the Object and Intent of Prophecy under the Old Dispensations*. This was a necessary preliminary step to the investigation of the Apocalypse, considered as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy; and it has been treated, amongst other writers, with distinguished ability, by Dr Thomas Jackson, by Bishop Sherlock, by Mr William Lowth in his Commentaries on the Prophets; and, last of all, by the late learned and lamented Mr Davison; who, in his invaluable *Discourses on Prophecy*, preached at the lecture founded by Bishop Warburton, has, with singular learning and ability, illustrated and established the spiritual character of ancient prophecy; and has shewn, in a review of ancient prophecy in its different stages, how “the Holy Jesus, and his religion, are the one principal object of prophecy, the beginning and end of the elder revelation of God¹.” These principles are farther considered in the following chapter, with reference to the interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; and the *fourth* chapter is devoted to the examination of the book itself, on the principles which have been laid down in the two preceding chapters. The *fifth* chapter is employed in the consideration of the conclusions which we derive from the preceding examination, with regard to the prophetical character of the Apocalypse, and a farther vindication of the

¹ *Discourses, &c.* p. 372.

great principles of interpretation, which have been adopted in this work; and the last chapter is devoted to the consideration of the arguments for the *Inspiration of the Apocalypse*, which we derive from the preceding examination. This is followed by a short Appendix of notes, relating to different important subjects connected with the preceding investigation, which it was impossible to introduce conveniently, either into the text, or the preceding notes; or which, from the limited period prescribed for my publication, could not be inserted in their proper place: on which account I must request the particular attention of the reader to them, in connection with that part of the work to which they more especially belong.

The view, therefore, which it is thus proposed to take of the great scheme of prophecy,—considered as extending, on the one hand, to the first promise of a Redeemer, and, on the other, to that blessed time, when the righteous shall be made happy for ever in heaven,—opens out a noble view of it in connection with the plan of man's redemption: and shews, how, “as a majestic river expands itself more and more, the farther it removes from its source; so *prophecy*, issuing from the first promise in Paradise, as its fountain-head, acquired additional strength and freshness, as it rolled down through successive ages; was enlarged in its course by a number of tributary streams; and will go on encreasing in

extent and grandeur, until it finally lose itself in the ocean of *eternity*¹."

But there are some other reasons, which make the study of this book more particularly interesting at the present period :

1. And the *first* is, the consideration of the prophecies relative to Papal Rome.

It was observed nearly ten years ago by a Right Reverend Prelate, whose learning and moderation will always command respect, that, "if we mistake not the signs of the times, the period is not far distant, when the whole controversy between the English and Romish Churches will be revived, and all the points in dispute brought again under review²:" and the events of the times, since this observation was made, have only confirmed the justice of the remark; when a question is actually raised with regard to the *very existence* of the Protestant Church, in one portion of the British Empire. But if, as it is probable, this, amongst other reasons, should call the more earnest attention of Christians in general to this important subject, it appears to me, that the prophecies relative to Papal Rome, which, in addition to those which are contained in the Epistles of St Paul, occupy so

¹ Bishop Van Mildert.

² "*Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries illus-*

trated from the Writings of Tertulian," by the present Bishop of Lincoln. Chap. v. p. 299.

large a portion of the books of Daniel and the Apocalypse,—lie at the foundation of the whole controversy: and it may justly strike serious Christians with fear, in what light the Great Disposer of all things may view the abandonment of a Church, which *is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone*, for a system, which is marked out in prophecy as one of the greatest corruptions of religion, which the world can ever know; and whose rise, whose power, and final destruction is described in this prophecy, in characters so awful! It is one object of this work to direct the attention of Christians to these prophecies; to exhort them to compare them with the history of the Papal Church in its different ages; and more especially at the present day in that unhappy country, in which the Protestant Faith is exposed to trials as afflicting, and persecutions as grievous, as it has ever experienced in the worst days of the Papal power; to consider well, that *the grounds, on which our forefathers separated from the Church of Rome, involve the fundamentals of the Christian faith*; and what a degree of guilt they may incur, who betray a trust so sacred; and one which has been committed as a sacred deposit to our charge by the great Author and Finisher of our faith¹. The

¹ I am happy in being able to strengthen these remarks, (remarks, I may add, which have been forced upon me by an attentive study of these pro-

phesies,) by the following striking and impressive passage from Bishop Burnet's *Introduction to his History of the Reformation*. After remarking upon some

application of these prophecies to Papal Rome is a question of Scripture, and of Scripture alone: and I do not know why such a view of them can either be charged with bigotry, or need impair the feelings of charity which we entertain towards any human being. It appears to me, that we have a model for our imitation in those Apostles, who have set before us an example, at once of firmness and of meekness, in "contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints¹." For though St Paul, on one occasion, which involved a compromise of the great principles of the Christian Faith, "withstood to the face" the chief of the

some important circumstances connected with the Roman Catholic Faith, and the Papal power in his own time, (circumstances to which it would not be difficult to find a parallel in the present day,) he thus proceeds: "By this we see, that how much soever we may let the fears of Popery wear out of our thoughts, they are never asleep, but go on steadily prosecuting their designs against us. Popery is Popery still, acted by a cruel and persecuting spirit: and with what caution soever they may hide or disown some scandalous practices, where heretics dare look into their proceedings, and lay them open; yet even these are still practised by them, when they know they may safely do it, and where none dare open their mouth against them; and therefore we see what reasons we have to be ever watching and on our guard against them."

"This is the duty of every single Christian amongst us; but certainly those Peers and Commoners, whom our constitution has made the trustees of our laws and liberties, and of the legal security of our religion, are under a

more particular obligation of watching carefully over this sacred trust; for which they must give a severe account in the last day, if they do not guard it against all danger, at what distance soever it may appear. If they do not maintain all the fences and outworks of it, or suffer breaches to be made on any of them; if they suffer any part of our legal establishment to be craftily undermined; if they are either absent or remiss on critical occasions; and if any views of advantage to themselves prevail on them to give up or abandon the establishment and security of our religion, God may work a deliverance for us another way, and if it seem good in his eyes he will deliver us: but they and their families shall perish, their names will rot and be held in detestation; posterity will curse them, and the judgments of God will overtake them; because they have sold that which was the most sacred of all things, and have let in an inundation of idolatry, superstition, tyranny, and cruelty upon their Church and country. Pp. 47, 48. Ed. Oxon. 1816.

¹ Jude 3.

Apostles, "because he was to be blamed¹," and denounced, in language so awful, those, who either assailed or corrupted the great doctrines of salvation²; yet it did not chill the warm benevolence of a heart, which had been first touched by the love of his Redeemer: nor, though St John branded him, who corrupted the one doctrine relative to the person of the Saviour, as "a deceiver and an anti-Christ³," did it subdue that meekness and tenderness of spirit, which, we may collect both from his writings and from history, dwelt in the breast of the "disciple whom Jesus loved;" and which doubtless, in no common degree, commended him to the love and affection of his Divine Master.

2. Another reason, which gives additional interest to the study of the Apocalypse at the present period, arises out of the peculiar circumstances of the world, and more particularly as they are connected with the interests and prospects of religion.

Whatever doubts may exist in the minds of many persons with regard to the interpretation of particular prophecies of the Apocalypse, it is evident that we are living *towards the close* of that period of 1260 years, which is so expressly pointed at in the prophecies of Daniel and St John, for the overthrow of the great anti-christian confederacies; the conversion and restoration of the Jews; and

¹ Gal. ii. 11. ² 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Gal. i. 8, 9. ³ 2 John 7; 1 John ii. 22.

the universal preaching of the Gospel in glory and in power. This is evident from the signs of the times; from the spread of the Gospel amongst heathen nations, beyond what has been known at any former period, since the age of miracles has ceased; from the intentness, with which the minds of men are directed to this important subject; and, above all, from the indifference and dissatisfaction, which the Heathen and Mahometan nations are beginning to shew with regard to their own superstitions. These indications of the approaching fulfilment of prophecy, cannot fail to strike every reflecting mind: and it is from the study of those prophecies, which are connected with these great events, that Christians, in this interesting period of the world, must learn their duty and their obligations. But this is more particularly necessary, in an age, when the unsettled state of men's minds; the restless eagerness, which we behold on all sides, after new speculations; and the unsettled condition of the nations of the earth, fill many sincere Christians with terror and dismay.

It is probable, as far as we can collect from Scripture, that those great changes in religion, which, we are led to expect, will either precede or accompany the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, must be in some measure effected by great commotions amongst the kingdoms of the earth. But, amidst these causes of doubt and alarm, the

Christian fixes his hopes on the sure promises of God: he knows, that "*the Lord is King, be the people never so impatient; he sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet*": and, amidst the clouds which overhang the prospect, he beholds all things working together for good with a view to the accomplishment of the purposes of God. Whatever discredit may have been thrown upon the study of prophecy, by the injudicious speculations of some inconsiderate persons, it is still worthy of the finest intellect; and one, which, not to mention examples from Scripture, has exercised the devout contemplation of the most powerful minds. It was in these studies, that the holy Daniel, amidst the gloom of captivity, the ruin of the Temple, and the prostration of his religion, refreshed the sorrows of his soul: and it is in noble and animating contemplations like these, that the Christian will add warmth to his devotion and vigour to his faith; while he dwells upon those sublime and mysterious dispensations for the everlasting happiness and salvation of man, which are a continual source, of the greatest delight, and the most rational happiness to the Christian *here*; and will constitute to the saints in light, the subject of unceasing gratitude and endless praises to the great Author of their salvation, in the glories of heaven hereafter.

¹ Psalm xcix. 1.

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHENTICITY¹ AND CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

ALTHOUGH the question of the Authenticity and Canonical Authority of the Apocalypse is not necessarily connected with the subject of the following Inquiry, which relates exclusively to the Prophetical Character and Inspiration of that book; and, in arguing upon these points, we necessarily take for granted that it is both canonical and that it was written by the author whose name it bears; yet perhaps the entire omission of all consideration of these questions would be deemed improper, when we consider, how much the reverence with which we regard any portion of Scripture, depends upon the full conviction which we entertain of its right and title to be considered as a part of the oracles of God.

This is rendered more particularly necessary in the present instance, when we reflect, how openly the Authenticity and Canonical Authority of the Apocalypse have been assailed by infidels, and the levity with which the subject has been treated by persons from whom better things might have been expected; and that the opinions of these persons have not been altogether without their influence on many, who have neither the opportunity nor the leisure for

¹ The word *authenticity* is used in the present Chapter according to the definition which is given of it by Bishop

Marsh, "to denote that a book was written by the author to whom it is ascribed." *Lectures*, Lect. XXIII. p. 4.

the investigation of these subjects. Intimately connected also with the question of the Authenticity and the Canonical Authority of the Apocalypse, is that relating to the *time* of its publication. The whole subject has been investigated with great learning and ability by different persons, and especially by Dr Lardner and Dean Woodhouse; and it is principally from the mass of evidence which has been collected by these learned writers, that the following summary is collected.

1. The Apocalypse is expressly attributed to St John three several times in the opening chapter¹: and, in the last of these passages, he describes himself as “being in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The writer, therefore, at the time when he saw the visions which are contained in this book, was under persecution, and a prisoner in the island of Patmos: and the consideration of these circumstances may enable us to ascertain with some certainty the date of the Apocalypse. (1). The earliest date which has been ascribed to the Apocalypse is the reign of Claudius. Now Claudius died A.D. 54, some years before the Apostle Paul is supposed, by the best critics, to have written his Epistle to the Ephesians and his first Epistle to Timothy. But from these Epistles we collect, that the Church of Ephesus was then in an infantine and unsettled state. Bishops were then first appointed there by St Paul’s order. But at the time when the Apocalypse was written, Ephesus and her sister churches appear to have been in a settled and even in a flourishing state; which could only be the work of time. There is in the

¹ Chap. i. 1, 4, 9.

address of our Lord to them a reference to their former conduct. Ephesus is represented as having forsaken her *former* love, or charity; Sardis as having acquired a name, or reputation, which she had also forfeited; Laodicea as become lukewarm, or indifferent. Now changes of this kind, in *a whole body* of Christians, must be gradual, and the production of many years². (2). Again, of the *seven* Churches which are mentioned in the Apocalypse, only *two* are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, those of Ephesus and Laodicea. The internal evidence of the book, therefore, in this respect alone, implies the existence of a different state of things from what was the case during the time of Claudius³. (3). Thirdly, the Gnostic heresies⁴ are described in this book as having attained to a great height in the churches of Asia: whereas they are merely alluded to by St Peter, in his second Epistle, which was certainly written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, and by St Jude, whose Epistle was probably written *about* that period, as evils of which they beheld the seeds springing up in the infant Church⁵. The existence of these heresies, therefore, in the Asiatic churches implies a more advanced condition of Christianity in them than was the case in the time of Claudius. (4). Further, we may observe, that “some expressions, which we meet with in the Apocalypse, are such as seem not to have been used in the early period of the Apostolic times. Sunday is called the Lord’s day⁶: and we find the same expression used by Ignatius⁷ and other writers of a later date. In the early books of Scripture, it

² Woodhouse, pp. 9, 10.

³ Vitring. in Apoc. Chap. i. 2. pp. 7, 8.

⁴ Chap. ii. 14, 15, &c.

⁵ 2 Pet. i. 1, &c. Vitring. 1b. p. 8.

⁶ Chap. i. 10.

⁷ Epist. ad Magnes. Sect. 9.

is called the first day of the week, or the first day after the Sabbath &c., but never the Lord's day¹." (5). Lastly, there is no evidence that any persecution in the reign of Claudius was of such a nature as to extend to the distant provinces of the Roman Empire. We are informed in the Acts of the Apostles, and it is confirmed by Heathen testimony, that Claudius, probably from an ill-founded jealousy of the rising sect of Christians, *commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome*, but this, as Vitranga has observed², is a very different thing from a persecution which extended to the distant provinces.

2. The next date which has been assigned for the publication of the Apocalypse is the reign of Nero; and this is done on the sole authority of a subscription to the Syriac Version of the Apocalypse³. Though, however, the internal evidence is not so decidedly against this, as it is against the former opinion, there is no proof of any persecution during the reign of Nero which extended so far as to Asia⁴; and the same arguments, which have been used with regard to the former opinion, are in a great measure applicable also to this.

3. The last opinion, which it is important to mention, is that which attributes the publication of the Apocalypse to the close of the reign of Domitian; and this opinion is not only free from the objections which may be urged against the two former, but is confirmed by the history of the Church at this period; when the Christians became the especial ob-

¹ Woodhouse, p. 10.

² Vitranga, p. 9. Acts xviii, 2.

³ This was probably made in the sixth century; and Lardner and Dean

Woodhouse have shewn how little value ought to be attached to this inscription. See Woodhouse, p. 12.

⁴ This is shewn by Lardner, Vol. II. p. 222.

ject of Domitian's cruelty, and many were sent by him into banishment, and many others were put to death⁵. During these persecutions the Apostle John was banished to Patmos, where he was favoured with the revelations which are the subject of this book. The death of Domitian happened A.D. 96; when St John obtained his liberty and returned to Ephesus. It is probable that he would then, if not sooner, publish his Apocalypse; the date of which is therefore fixed by Lardner, Mill, Woodhouse, and the majority of critics, to the year 96 or 97. And this date is confirmed by the internal evidence of the book itself. For the heresies, which are alluded to in the Epistles of St Paul, St Peter, and St Jude, as having recently sprung up in the infant churches of Asia, and which also appear to be more openly spoken of by St John himself in his first Epistle,—(for the opinions to which he so repeatedly alludes as being directed against the article of our Saviour's Incarnation, were essentially of a Gnostic character,)—had, before this period, had full opportunity of arriving at the degree of maturity, in which they are described as being at the time when St John wrote the Apocalypse; and the growing sect of the Christians in the distant provinces had begun to experience those terrors of persecution, which had at a much earlier period visited their brethren in Judea and in the capital of the Roman empire. And this date of the publication of the Apocalypse is confirmed by the testimony of Irenæus, who has not only repeatedly quoted this book⁶, but expressly ascribes it to "John the Evangelist, the

⁵ Euseb. III. 17, 18.

⁶ "There are twenty-two Chapters in the book of Revelation, and Irenæus quotes from thirteen of them, producing

more than twenty-four passages, some of considerable length." Woodhouse. Compare the *Index to Irenæus*. Ed. Grabe.

disciple of the Lord, that John who leaned on his Lord's breast at the last supper¹;" and has also mentioned with equal clearness the *period* at which these revelations were vouchsafed to him: "For it was not seen," he observes, "a long time ago, but almost in our own age, toward the end of Domitian's reign²."

Now this testimony of Irenæus is peculiarly valuable. He was a Greek by birth, probably an Asiatic Greek; he had been a disciple of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who himself had been a hearer of St John; and, upon the martyrdom of Pothinus, he became Bishop of Lyons. He was born, according to the opinion of Dodwell, about A.D. 97, in the reign of Nerva, though his birth is placed by others ten years later; and he lived to about A.D. 190³. He was a man, as his writings testify, not only of extensive learning, but of eminent piety: and his testimony,—embracing, as it does, the general opinion on this subject of two distant portions of the Christian world, and extending nearly from the period when the Apocalypse was composed to the close of the second century,—may be deemed conclusive, both with regard to the time of its publication, as well as that it is the work of the Apostle and Evangelist St John.

This point, relating to the probable *time* of the composition and publication of the Apocalypse, has been dwelt upon at greater length, not only because it is intimately connected with the question of its Authenticity and Canonical Authority, but also because the determination of this point is necessary to enable us to form a due estimate of the opinions

¹ Iren. Lib. iv. 37. 50. 27.

² 'Οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐωράθη, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Διομετια-

νοῦ ἀρχῆς. Iren. v. 3 a. (Grabe, p. 449.) Euseb. Hist. iii. 18.

³ See Lardner, *Cred.* Book 11. Chap. xvii. pp. 363, &c.

of some eminent writers with respect to the prophetic system of the Apocalypse.

Epiphanius, who lived in the fourth century, is the first person who has asserted that the Apocalypse was composed in the reign of Claudius: and some credit has been attempted to be gained to the same opinion from the authority of Arethas, who has explained some of its prophecies with reference to the Jewish wars, and has affirmed that "destruction was not yet come upon the Jews, by the arms of the Romans, when he (the writer of the Apocalypse) received these prophecies." But the earliest date which has been assigned to the commentary of Arethas, is the sixth century; and Woodhouse is of opinion, that there is internal evidence in the work itself, which will prove it to be of later date. A similar opinion has been also adopted by Grotius and Hammond, who are of opinion that the first part of the Apocalypse was written by St John in Patmos, in the reign of Claudius, and the remainder of the book at Ephesus during the reign of Vespasian. Lightfoot asserts generally that it was written previously to the destruction of Jerusalem; and Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion that St John was banished to Patmos, and that the Revelation was seen in the reign of Nero, before the destruction of Jerusalem⁴.

These opinions have been adopted generally by a learned writer of the present day, who states, that he believes the Author of the Apocalypse, (which he does not expressly attribute to St John,) to have "lived some time before the destruction of Jerusalem⁵."

⁴ See Vitring. p. 6. Lardner, Vol. III. p. 222.

⁵ See an *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, by the Rev. S. Lee, D. D. Regius Professor of Hebrew in the

University of Cambridge, contained in a Volume entitled *Six Sermons on the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, &c. p. 281.

This writer follows for the most part, in his exposition of this prophecy, the prophetic systems of Grotius and Hammond. Notwithstanding, however, the high respect which is due to the deliberate opinion of some of these eminent men, nothing has been advanced by them affecting the opinion, which has been established by many conclusive arguments, and particularly by the testimony of Irenæus, that the visions of the Apocalypse were seen towards the close of the reign of Domitian, and were consigned to writing about the same period¹.

In a question, however, of considerable importance with regard to the authority of a book, which has been more especially the subject of attack from infidels, it will be proper to produce some few out of the great mass of testimonies in support of the opinion of Irenæus, with regard to its early reception in the Christian Church, and the remarkable unanimity with which it was ascribed to St John.

1. The first of these is Ignatius, who died A.D. 107. Now he does not directly quote the Apocalypse; and the same may be said with regard to most of the other books of the New Testament. But Dean Woodhouse has produced evidence from his Epistles, sufficient to prove that he was acquainted with it, and has assigned very good reasons why, considering the circumstances under which his Epistles were written, we should not expect more deliberate quotations from it.

2. Papias was of the Apostolic age, from A.D.

¹ See the whole question examined with great learning and candour by Lardner, in his *History of the Apostles and Evangelists*, Vol. III. Chap. ix. pp. 221, &c. Dean Woodhouse is of opinion, that there is internal evidence

in the Apocalypse itself to prove that it was written *after* the Apostle's release from Patmos; and he refers to Chap. i. 9: "I WAS in the isle that is called Patmos."

110 to 115, and has not directly quoted the Apocalypse; but the manner in which he has mentioned the Millennium proves that he was acquainted with it.

3. Justin Martyr, who was born in Palestine about the end of the first century, in the second part of his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, referring to the book of Revelation, says expressly that it was written by "John, one of the Apostles of Christ." "And this testimony of Justin Martyr," as Bishop Marsh has observed, "is so much the more remarkable, as it is the *only* book in the whole New Testament of which Justin Martyr has ever named the author²."

4. There are express allusions to it in THE EPISTLE FROM THE GALLIC CHURCHES, which was written about A.D. 177, eighty years after the publication of the Apocalypse.

5. Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived within a century after the first publication of the Apocalypse, has frequently quoted it, and referred to it as the work of an Apostle.

6. Tertullian wrote about the same time with Clemens, and lived far into the next century. He is the most ancient of the Latin Fathers whose works have descended to our times. He quotes, or refers to, the Apocalypse in above seventy passages of his writings; and he appeals to it directly as the work of the Apostle John. He defends the authenticity of the book against the heretic Marcion, by asserting its *external evidence*. He appeals in its defence to the Asiatic churches, and assures us, that "though Marcion rejects it, yet the suc-

² Bp Marsh's *Lectures*, Lect. xxv. p. 64.

cession of Bishops traced to its origin will establish John to be its author¹." In particular, it may be observed, that Tertullian has quoted Rev. i. 6. as a passage common in the mouths of the *laity* of his time. "This frequent and popular appeal to the Apocalypse," as Dean Woodhouse has justly observed, "shews it to be a book much read and generally received in the African churches of the second century²."

7. Early in the third century we have the evidence of Hippolytus; and of Origen, who quotes it repeatedly as the work of St John. Now Origen was born in the year 184 or 185, and lived to his 70th year; and when we consider the period during which he lived, and his extraordinary labours in connexion with the Scriptures, which justly entitle him to the honour of being considered the father of sacred criticism, his testimony is of the highest value.

8. Eusebius, though his opinion is not altogether free from difficulty with regard to the early reception of the Apocalypse, has clearly marked his own opinion of it by placing it amongst those books of the New Testament which were universally read and acknowledged to be genuine³.

9. It was received and quoted repeatedly by Athanasius; by Jerome, though he says that it was rejected by the Greek Christians⁴; and by Augustine, though he admits that it was not universally received⁵.

¹ Adv. Marcion. Lib. iv. Chap. 5.

² Woodhouse, p. 51.

³ See Bp Marsh, *Lectures*, Lect. xxiv. p. 28. But compare what is said by Dean Woodhouse, *Diss.* pp.

78—83; and Lardner, Vol. iii. p. 448. Horne, *Introd.* Vol. i. p. 79.

⁴ Lardner, Vol. iii. p. 449.

⁵ *Ib.* pp. 448, 449.

In this enumeration of testimonies in support of the authenticity and canonical authority of the Apocalypse, we have omitted many important testimonies in its favour; that of Cyprian and of the Church of Rome in his time, besides that of many Latin authors who are mentioned by Lardner. It was received by Novatus and his followers, probably by the Manichees, by the Donatists, by the Arians, and it is found in the Alexandrian manuscript, which was probably not written later than the fifth century⁶. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject of evidence any further. With such testimony, not only of the most eminent individuals in the Christian world, but of whole churches,—extending, as we have seen, from the close of the fourth century to the period of the publication of the Apocalypse,—to the general reception of this book, it is surprising that any persons should have ventured to assail its authenticity and general reception in the Church from the earliest period. If some persons, and even some portions of the early Christian Church, have entertained doubts on these subjects; the same scruples have been entertained with respect to other books of the New Testament. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St James, the second Epistle of St Peter, the second and third of St John, and the Epistle of St Jude, have, in this respect, shared the same fate with the book of Revelation. But few persons have ever ventured to reject these books on evidence so weak, as the scruples of individuals, and the ill-founded objections of particular bodies of Christians, in opposition to the great weight of

⁶ See Lardner, *Ib.* p. 448, where he has given references to different parts of his own works in support of these positions.

testimony in their favour, which is derived from their reception by the most illustrious names and the most ancient and purest churches in the Christian world. Why then should we pursue a different method with the Apocalypse, which, from the mysterious character of the book alone, might lead many to neglect, and even, in some instances, to reject it? Or ought these circumstances to weigh against the great mass of testimony in its favour? Dr Whitby and other writers have omitted the Apocalypse in their commentaries on the New Testament. But would any one infer, from this circumstance, that they either doubted or denied its divine authority? Why then should we observe a different rule, in arguing against the divine authority of this book, from the circumstance of its omission by some of the early writers of the Christian Church?

1. But considerable weight has been laid upon some circumstances which are connected with the apparent rejection of the Apocalypse in the early ages of Christianity; and the first of these is the omission of this book in the old Syriac Version of the New Testament. This argument has been brought forward by Michaëlis; and Dean Woodhouse has attempted to shew that it is of no value, because Bishop Marsh has shewn that the Syriac Version was not made till a later period¹. But if the Syriac Version was made, as Archbishop Laurence has given us good reason to believe, in the early part of the second century², we do not want any additional reason for the omission of the Apo-

¹ Marsh's Michaëlis, Vol. II. Part II. p. 554, note. Woodhouse, *Dissertation*, p. 34.

² See the question relative to the

antiquity of the Syriac Version discussed by him at length, in his *Dissertation upon the Logos of St John*, pp. 69—74, note.

calypse in the Syriac Version. And this appears to have been the opinion of Bishop Marsh himself at a later period; because, observing with respect to the omission of the second Epistle of St Peter, with the second and third of St John, and the Epistle of Jude, in the old Syriac Version, he says, that "the omission of them may probably be ascribed to the early age in which the Syrian Canon was formed. And if that Canon was formed before those Epistles were known to the Syrian Church, the *omission* of them cannot be construed into a *rejection* of them³." The same reasoning will apply to the Apocalypse: and we may observe that the omission of these books in the old Syriac Version, at the same time that it is accounted for by the early period at which the Syriac Version was made, in itself supplies a very powerful argument in support of the great antiquity of this version.

2. Another argument, upon which great stress has been laid, is the omission of the Apocalypse in the catalogue of the Council of Laodicea⁴. But Lardner is of opinion, that "it cannot be concluded from thence that this book was rejected by the bishops of that council. Their design seems to have been to mention by name those books only which should be publicly read⁵." However, after all, the character of this council does not induce us to attribute any great weight to its decisions. It is described by Lardner as being "a particular council only, consisting of thirty or forty bishops of Lydia and the neighbouring countries;" and Basnage observes, in

³ Bp Marsh's *Lectures*, Lect. xxv. p. 61.

⁴ This is urged by Mr Gibbon, Chap. xv. Sect. 2. note 67.

⁵ Lardner, Vol. III. p. 448.

his History of the Church, that "Protestants and Catholics have equally disparaged this synod." The date also of this Council, (though it is supposed by Lardner to have been held about A.D. 363¹), is involved in great uncertainty; a circumstance which alone proves that little importance was attached to it in the earlier ages.

These are some of the principal arguments which have been urged against the early reception of the Apocalypse. We may see how little weight they are entitled to, when they are considered in opposition to the great mass of evidence in its support: and we are enabled to appreciate the dishonesty of Mr Gibbon, when, in speaking of the Apocalypse, he hazards such unfounded assertions as the following—that "it narrowly escaped the proscription of the Church;" and that "the Greeks were subdued into the adoption of it by the authority of an impostor, who in the *sixth* century assumed the character of Dionysius the Areopagite²." The mention of calumnies, like these, is important in this point of view,—that it enables us to estimate the degree of weight which is due to the general assertions of Mr Gibbon and writers of his class, when they are connected with the subject of religion; assertions, however, which, though they are unsupported by evidence, from the confidence with which they are made, are often the means of leading unsuspecting persons into error. The evidence which has been produced, brief and imperfect as it necessarily is, is sufficient to contradict every insinuation which may be directed against the early reception

¹ Lardner, Vol. II. pp. 414—416.

² Gibbon, Vol. I. Chap. XV. p. 563.
Compare Woodhouse's *Dissertation*,

pp. 76, 77, with regard to a similar assertion of this writer.

and the authority of the Apocalypse; and to establish the truth of the assertions of two most eminent writers on this subject;—of Mr Mede, when he says, that “the Apocalypse hath more human (not to speak of *divine*) authority, than any other book of the New Testament besides, even from the time it was first delivered³,” and of Sir Isaac Newton,—that he “does not find any other book of the New Testament so strongly attested, or commented upon so early, as this of the Apocalypse⁴.”

With respect to the *internal* evidence for the authenticity of the Apocalypse,—although this more particularly belongs to a future stage of the inquiry,—it may be with confidence asserted, that the evidence which we derive both from a comparison of the great doctrines of the Apocalypse, as well as of the language of this book, with the other writings of St John, is such as to prove, in the most convincing manner, that they both proceeded from the same author. There is however one objection,—derived from the alledged discrepancy in sentiment, expression, and manner between the Apocalypse and the Gospel of St John,—which has been advanced, to prove, on the one hand, that the Apocalypse was not written by him, and, on the other, that it was written in early life, and many years before he wrote his Gospel. This last is the argument of Michaëlis, who grounds his opinion on the general observation, that “when there is this change in the style of an author, we naturally look for the bold, sublime, and perhaps incorrect style, in his youth, and the gentler and more finished manner in his

³ Mede, *Works*, p. 602.

the Apocalypse, Part II. Chap. i. p.

⁴ Sir Isaac Newton on Daniel and 219.

later years¹." The force of this argument has, however, been taken off by Dean Woodhouse, who has sufficiently accounted for this difference of style, by a consideration of the causes which will explain the reason of the sublime imagery and animated mode of writing in the Apocalypse, where it differs from the calmer style of St John. "The Gospel," he observes, "appears to have been written by St John after an interval of about thirty years from the events which he relates². At such a distance of time the mind is enabled to look back with composure, and to represent with serenity transactions which could not be narrated soon after they had happened, without warm and passionate expressions. It seems to be owing partly to this cause, that the Evangelist is seen to relate in so cool a tenour of style, in the Gospel, those sufferings of his beloved Lord which he had witnessed, and which, if related by him immediately after the events had taken place, could not have been told otherwise than with emotion and indignation. But the Apocalypse was written by its author immediately after he had seen the vision; the impressions on his mind had no time to cool; his expressions kept pace with his feelings, and his style became vivid and glowing³."

Such then is a portion of the evidence, on which we acknowledge the authenticity and canonical au-

¹ See Michaëlis, Vol. iv. pp. 532—536, where all these different objections are stated at length.

² Baanage, Lampe, Lardner, Dr Owen, Michaëlis, and Dean Woodhouse, suppose it to have been written a short time previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. Chrysostom and Epiphanius, amongst the ancients, and Dr Mill, Le Clerc, Fabricius, Jones,

and Bishop Tomline, amongst the moderns, suppose it to have been written about A. D. 97 or 98. Dr Lardner supposes that it was written in the year 68. See the arguments in support of this opinion candidly stated by him, in his *History of St John*, Vol. III. p. 228, &c.

³ Woodhouse, *Dissertation*, &c. pp. 120—123.

thority of the Apocalypse. Those who wish to pursue the subject farther, must seek for additional evidence in the writings of those persons, who have more especially considered this subject, particularly those of Dr Lardner and Dean Woodhouse. Our belief of its *inspiration* must rest on different grounds—on those of its prophetical character,—of doctrines contained in it, which were out of the power of unassisted reason to discover,—and on the many different evidences, by which we are assured that the Scriptures are a revelation from above. But it is a subject of gratitude to the Giver of every good gift, that he has vouchsafed to afford us such unimpeachable testimony in support of the authority of a book, which comes to us under the imposing and majestic character of THE GREAT PROPHECY OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION;—the storehouse of the destinies of the Christian Church to the end of all things;—which is ushered in, and is closed with a solemnity and awe, which belongs to no other book in the volume of Inspiration;—with so solemn a blessing on “him that readeth and those that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein⁴,” and with so awful a denunciation against him, who presumes either “to add or to take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, that God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book⁵;”—and which, above all, comes to us under the express sanction and authority of HIM, who is the Author of our faith and the Finisher of our salvation.

⁴ Chap. i. 3.

⁵ Chap. xxii. 18, 19.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE OBJECT AND INTENT OF PROPHECY UNDER THE PATRIARCHAL AND JEWISH DISPENSATIONS.

IN endeavouring to form a right judgment with regard to the prophetical character of the Apocalypse, it is necessary that we should, in the first place, lay down the *principles*, on which the investigation ought to be conducted, and the *grounds*, on which our conclusions with regard to its prophetical character ought to be established. These are considerations of great importance: because it is, for the most part, from a want of considering the place which is occupied by the Apocalypse in the great scheme of prophecy, and what, therefore, may be justly presumed to be the great object of the prophecies contained in this mysterious book, considered with reference to this relation,—that many persons of great ability have fallen into material errors with regard to its prophetical character; and have attributed to it views, which are entirely inconsistent with the real station which it occupies in the revelations of God.

In surveying the whole range of Scripture prophecy, it may be considered under *two* great divisions: (1) First, that which extends from the first obscure revelation of the promise of a Redeemer to the coming of our Saviour; which includes the prophecies which were delivered under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations: (2) And secondly, the prophecies of the New Testament; which include those

which were delivered by our Saviour and his Apostles; and of which the most distinguished and important, considered as a body of prophecy, are those which are comprehended in the Apocalypse of St John, and which close the volume of Revelation.

Now although the prophecies of our Saviour and his Apostles relate generally to events which are connected with the most important revolutions and destinies of the Christian church, yet the Apocalypse must be considered as the great prophecy of the Christian dispensation. It occupies the same station in the new dispensation that the writings of the Jewish prophets do in the former dispensations: and as the prophecies of these dispensation form the connecting link between the first promise of a Redeemer and the coming of our Saviour, so do the prophecies of the Apocalypse, in like manner, constitute the bond of connection between this period and the great consummation of all things;—with this additional circumstance of peculiarity, that—if the prophecies of the old dispensation have reference to the future progress and prospects of the Gospel in the world, and to the fates and destinies of the Redeemer's kingdom,—we may expect to find, in these respects, a certain harmony and agreement between the prophecies of both dispensations; and that those parts of the earlier prophecies, as well as of those which were delivered by our Saviour and his Apostles, which are connected with the more distant parts of the divine economy, should appear again in a new form, and with additional light, in this last and closing part of the oracles of God.

If such, therefore, be the connection between the prophecies of both dispensations, it is only by con-

sidering the Apocalypse in connection with the preceding prophecies of the Old and New Testaments,—both with reference to the great subject of prophecy in general, and to the *principles*, on which these revelations of the Almighty Will to mankind have been conducted,—that we can either derive the true principles of interpretation which are applicable to this mysterious book, or establish just conclusions with regard to the real character of the revelations which are contained in it.

I. The first point, therefore, to be ascertained with reference to this part of the subject, is with regard to *the great object and scope of ancient prophecy*.

This is expressly declared in the Apocalypse by the angel to the Apostle himself, when, in answer to the worship which was offered to him by St John, he declared to him, “*See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY;*” which has been well explained by Bishop Hurd: “The spirit of prophecy is but the testimony of Jesus; it has no other use or end but to do honour to him; the prophet, whether he be angel or man, is only the minister of God to bear witness to his Son; and his commission is ultimately directed to this one purpose of manifesting the glories of his kingdom¹.” “And this text,” as the same learned writer has observed, “is properly a key put into our hands to open to us the mysteries of that dispensation, which had in view ultimately the person of Christ, and the various revolutions of his kingdom. *The*

¹ Bishop Hurd, *Introduction to the Prophecies*, Sermon 11. p. 29.

spirit of prophecy is universally the testimony of Jesus².

Indeed, our Lord himself appeals to *the spirit of prophecy* as bearing witness to his person and dispensation: *Search the Scriptures*, he said to the Jews, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me³*: and, in that memorable discourse which he held with his disciples after his resurrection, he gave convincing proofs to how great an extent He was himself the subject of all the preceding revelations of God, when *beginning at Moses and ALL the prophets he expounded unto them in ALL the Scriptures the things concerning himself⁴*. And the Apostles, both in their public discourses to the people, and in their writings, are frequent and explicit in their appeals to the prophecies of the Old Testament, and in their assertions, that the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom constitute the spirit of prophecy, and the great and

² Ib. p. 31. "To speak of prophecy (Bishop Hurd observes) under the idea of a testimony to, or concerning Jesus, is conforming to the true scriptural idea of that gift. Thus we are told that—to him (i. e. to Jesus) give all the prophets witness—τούτω πάντες προφήται μαρτυροῦσιν, Acts x. 43. Prophecy, therefore, being the thing here spoken of, is rightly called the testimony, or witness, to, or concerning Jesus." "And the construction (as the learned Prelate further observes) is fully justified, 1, by observing, that the genitive case (as here Ἰησοῦ) is frequently used in Scripture, not actively, but passively. See a variety of instances in Mede, *Works*, p. 771, where he explains διδασκαλίας δαιμονίων: and 2, by referring the reader to the following passages of St Paul, where the very expression of the text is so used, μή οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς τὸ μαρ-

τύριον τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν—clearly, be not ashamed of bearing testimony to our Lord, 2 Tim. i. 8; and to Rev. i. 9, where the Apostle tells us, he was in the isle of Patmos,—διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—on account of having been faithful in preaching the word of God, and in bearing testimony to Jesus Christ; and still more plainly, Rev. xii. 17.—τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ: where the persons who are described as being the objects of the dragon's fury are the WITNESSES, those faithful servants of truth, who suffered for the courageous and persevering testimony they gave, in evil times, to Jesus Christ, and to his pure religion." Note, Sermon. II. pp. 31–34.

³ John v. 39.

⁴ Luke xxiv. 27.

prominent subject of all the preceding revelations of God¹.

This is evident from considering the state of prophecy,

1. *First, before the Law;*
2. And, *Secondly, under the Law.*

1. This was the subject of the first promise made to Adam after the fall. "Man was not excluded from Paradise till God had sent him forth with some pledge of hope and consolation²:" and the traces of this promise, and the glorious hopes which it inspired, are to be perceived in the few revelations to the Patriarchs and holy men of old, which are recorded in the Scriptures; and in the triumphant declarations of trust and confidence in God, and the animated avowals of a glorious and heavenly hope, which were uttered by them under various circumstances of affliction and distress. We behold it in the faith of Enoch, who spake so clearly with regard to the coming of the Redeemer to judgment³: and if his faith was so clear with regard to his coming to judgment, why not with regard to his advent of redemption? We behold it in Job, who derived, amidst his unparalleled sufferings, the most triumphant joy and consolation from the assurance of his faith, which taught him to look forward to that blessed day when he should behold his Redeemer upon earth: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine*

¹ Compare Acts iii. 18. 24. x. 43.
1 Pet. i. 10, &c.

² Davison's *Lectures on Prophecy*,
p. 101.

³ Jude 14.

eyes shall behold, and not another;⁴ where, as Bishop Pearson has admirably observed, “the title which he gives to him on whom he depends, the *Redeemer*, sheweth that he understands it of *Christ*; the time expressed denotes the futurity at *the latter day*; the description of that Redeemer, *standing on the earth*, representeth the Judge of the quick and the dead; and *seeing God with his eyes*, declares his belief in the incarnation⁵.” We behold it in Abraham, with regard to whom, in whatever light we may regard the promises which were made to him by God, as having been fulfilled in any degree of temporal greatness, which was vouchsafed to him and to his posterity, they can only be understood, in their true sense and their complete fulfilment, with reference to that Redeemer, *whose day*, in the ardency of his faith, *he desired to see, and he saw it, and was glad*⁶; and in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed⁷. And the spiritual character of Abraham’s expectation is proved by the manner in which the Almighty, in the promise of *temporal* blessings to Ishmael, expressly contrasts them with the *spiritual* blessings of which he promised to make Isaac the channel to his posterity: “*And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him*

⁴ Job xix. 25–27. ⁵ Pearson *On the Creed*, Art. xi. p. 337. Ed. 1741.

⁶ John viii. 56.

⁷ Gen. xii. 3, &c.

*a great nation: BUT MY COVENANT WILL I ESTABLISH WITH ISAAC*¹." Indeed no measure of temporal greatness, which was ever vouchsafed either to Isaac or Jacob², can justify the application of the divine promises to them in a *temporal* view: and Jacob himself gave proof of his own view of the peculiar nature of the distinguished blessings which God had promised to his posterity, when,—amidst the various prophecies relating to the different tribes, some of which were accompanied with the promise of distinguished temporal blessings,—he expressly pointed out that tribe, from which the Redeemer of mankind was to descend³.

2. If we consider the state of prophecy *under* the Law, we shall find that it was directed to the same great object,—to prepare the Jewish people and the world in general, for the coming of the promised Redeemer. The Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom was not only made the subject of direct prophecy; but this subject pervades the whole scheme of ancient prophecy, as constituting the great subject of the divine revelations, the ultimate end of the dispensations of God.

The fortunes indeed of the Jewish people—the punishments which God denounced upon them for their rebellion and ingratitude—the promises of mercy to be vouchsafed to them on their repentance and amendment—and the judgments of God on the neighbouring nations,—constitute a constant subject of prophecy. But “prophecy having been, in the first instance, directed to the subject of the promised redemption, could in after times be directed

¹ Gen. xvii. 19—21.

² Sherlock *On Prophecy*, Disc. v. pp. 116—122.

³ Gen. x. 8—12.

to nothing greater⁴:" and, amidst the various topics which constitute the theme of ancient prophecy, the prophets continually dwell upon that, which was the great subject of prophecy from the beginning and the great object of the divine dispensations,—the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom.

Such, therefore, appears to have been the great scope and object of prophecy under the former dispensations. It is evident that these facts ought always to be kept in view, in forming our opinion with respect to the intention of prophecy under that more perfect and spiritual dispensation; of which the great end and object was the complete accomplishment of that redemption, which was planned in the counsels of infinite wisdom from the foundation of the world.

II. But there are other points, of which the consideration is necessary, in order that we may arrive at just conclusions with regard to the true object and intent of ancient prophecy; and that we may be the better enabled to understand the *principles*, on which our investigation of the great end and object of prophecy under the new dispensation ought to be conducted.

1. And, in the first place, with regard to the Person, who appears to have been the great Agent of prophecy under the former dispensations.

It is the doctrine of the New Testament and of the Christian Church from the beginning, that the Agent in those divine manifestations, which were vouchsafed to the patriarchs and prophets of old, was not the Eternal Father himself, but the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity, the Divine

⁴ Davison.

WORD; "who was in the beginning; who was with God, and was God; and by whom the worlds were made¹." *He* it was, who appeared to our first parents in Paradise, and gave to them that blessed prophecy—the first dawn of hope and consolation to fallen man—of "the seed of the woman, who should break the head of the serpent²;" who appeared to Abraham on so many interesting occasions, and gave to him and confirmed to him with an oath the promise, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed³;" who appeared to Isaac⁴; and manifested himself to Jacob⁵; and from whom, as "the Angel who redeemed him from all evil," he implored a blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh⁶; who appeared to Moses in the bush under the incommunicable name of "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," and under those same attributes which were afterwards assumed by the Redeemer himself to express his own eternity⁷; who was manifested to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, and led them through the wilderness, in the pillar of a cloud and of fire, to the promised land⁸; and who, finally, appeared on other occasions of interest and importance to his chosen servants⁹.

¹ John i. 1, 2.

² Gen. iii. 16.

³ Compare Gen. xvii. 1—9; xviii. 1, 17—23, &c.; xxii. 11—18; and Bp Kidder's notes on Gen. xvi. 7; Exod. xxiii. 20. Compare also what Bp Patrick says on these passages, and particularly on Exod. xxiii. 20.

⁴ Gen. vi. 2, 24.

⁵ Gen. xxviii. 12—15, &c.

⁶ Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.

⁷ Exod. iii. 2, 6, 13—15; Acts vii. 30—32; John viii. 58.

⁸ Acts vii. 38; Hebr. xii. 24—26; Isai. lxi. 9; 1 Cor. x. 9; Exod. xiii.

21; xiv. 19; xxxiii. 13. See W. Lowth on Isai. lxi. 9.

⁹ Joshua i. 1; v. 13—15; Judges vi. 11—24; xiii. 18; and compare Bp Patrick's notes on these passages: where he maintains, in opposition to his former opinion, that the Person, who appeared on these occasions, was "the LORD himself; that is, the WORD of the LORD: who was to be the *Messiah*; unto whom the Prophet *Isaiah* gives the name of *Pele*, the *Wonderful*, Isai. ix. 6." Patrick on Judg. xiii. 18. See also W. Lowth on Isai. ix. 6.

But when the light of prophecy began to shine with greater clearness; and those prophets appeared, who were especially commissioned by the Most High to announce the glad tidings of the promised redemption to his chosen people, the great Redeemer himself appears upon the scene, not only as the great subject of prophecy, but as the sender and inspirer of those prophets who were commanded to announce his coming! When the evangelical prophet was commissioned with his message to the rebellious people of Israel, and was admitted to the vision of "the Lord sitting upon his throne," amidst the adoration of the heavenly hosts,—“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory¹⁰,”—*Who* is it that was the great Agent in this mysterious scene? Who but the great Redeemer, who has *himself* testified that, in this mysterious vision, the “prophet saw *his* glory and spake of *him*¹¹!”

In like manner, when the prophet Ezekiel was sent to the captivity of the house of Israel, in that sublime and mysterious vision which is recorded in the beginning of his prophecy, he describes himself as having seen “above the firmament that was above the heads of the cherubims, the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire throne; and upon the likeness of the throne *the likeness of the appearance of a man above upon it*¹².” In which vision, as is remarked by an excellent commentator, “the form and shape of a man is directly represented to Ezekiel, as a *præludium* or figure of the Incarnation¹³.” And the same mysterious vision,

¹⁰ Isai. vi. 1—3.

¹¹ John xii. 41.

¹² Ezek. i. 26—28.

¹³ W. Lowth on Ezek. i. 26.

accompanied by the same mysterious distinctions, was vouchsafed on another occasion to the same prophet¹!

In like manner also, when the same Divine Person appeared to the prophet Daniel, the prophet describes himself as “lifting up his eyes, and looking, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz; his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour unto polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude².” On this occasion, and on another occasion towards the close of the prophecy, did the same Divine Person appear, inspiring and directing the prophet, and comforting him with regard to the final glorious issue of the mysterious dispensations of God³!

But not only does this Divine Person appear upon the scene as the great sender and inspirer of his servants the prophets, and as carrying into effect his mysterious and wonderful predictions; but he sometimes vouchsafes clearer intimations of his incarnation, when he describes himself as “sending his messenger to prepare his way before him⁴,” and as the Person who should be “pierced” for their sins⁵! Indeed, what a sublime and interesting view does it give us of the great mystery of our redemption, when we behold that Divine Person, who was made flesh for our sakes and suffered death upon the cross for our salvation, appearing in his pre-existent state, as the great Agent of this mysterious scheme,—as inspiring his prophets, and overruling by his almighty

¹ Ezek. x. 1.

² Dan. x. 5, 6.

³ Ib. xii. 7—13.

⁴ Mal. iii. 1.

⁵ Zech. xii. 10.

power that wonderful course of events, which was destined to bring in the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom.

2. Another point, which is necessary to be considered, relates to the peculiar characteristics of ancient prophecy.

(1) Some of the prophecies of the Old Testament point out with the greatest clearness and distinctness the most important subjects connected with the Christian dispensation. But, with regard to a considerable proportion of the prophecies of the Old Testament, they are clothed in language which is highly figurative and sublime; describing passing and future events, relating to God's peculiar people and the enemies of his Church, in terms,—which, though they are in some degree applicable to these objects, evidently look to some higher fulfilment, in events which will be accomplished in some future stage of the divine dispensations.

Such a system of prophecy,—as it naturally arose out of the peculiar character of the former dispensation, which was only typical of that more perfect and spiritual dispensation which was to follow it,—was peculiarly adapted to the condition and prospects of the people who lived under that dispensation; and was eminently calculated to perform the office for which it was especially designed by the Almighty,—which was to support faith rather than to gratify curiosity.

This *double sense* of prophecy⁶, as it is called, runs through the principal part of the ancient pro-

⁶ With regard to these prophecies, see Bp Hurd, *Lectures on Prophecy*, Sermon III; Craven *On the Jewish and Christian Dispensations*, chap. xi; Bp Van Mildert's *Boyle's Lectures*,

Sermon XXII. pp. 379—381; and particularly Bp Warburton, *Divine Legation*, Book vi. sect. 6; and Mr W. Lowth's *Preface to Isaiah*.

phesies: and, in the *certainty* of its application, derives a peculiar confirmation from our Redeemer himself;—who, in the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which is contained in the twenty-fourth chapter of St Matthew's gospel, has described this awful event in terms, which,—~~though~~ they have a plain and obvious reference to that great and stupendous event, which was the immediate subject of the prophecy,—are applicable only, in their full extent, to that more awful destruction of which it was the type; and which, we are led to believe in other parts of Scripture, will accompany the final dissolution of all things¹.

It is manifest that, although such a system of prophecy was peculiarly adapted to the Jewish dispensation, it is not equally adapted to the objects of prophecy under the Christian dispensation; which, having no succeeding dispensation in view, must necessarily be for the most part directed,—*obscurely*, it is true, considered with reference to the most distant events in the Christian Church, yet—*immediately* and *directly* to those great and important events, which are connected with the destinies of the Redeemer's kingdom until the great consummation of all things. But a due consideration of the spiritual character of these prophecies will often lead us to a more just view of the character of the prophecies of the New Testament, whose real scope and object have been greatly mistaken for want of sufficiently attending to these considerations. The writings of the ancient prophets are so full of this

¹ The impossibility of separating the two great events, which are the subject of this prophecy, and of assigning to each its own particular portion in the prediction, cannot be shewn

in a more convincing manner than by considering the unsuccessful attempts of Bishop Horsley to this effect. See Horsley's *Sermons*, Sermons II. III.

description of prophecies, that it is almost impossible to specify particular examples. It will be sufficient to allude to the book of Isaiah, as exhibiting throughout, and particularly in the latter part, a remarkable instance of this *double* or *secondary* sense of prophecy; to the prophecies relating to the restoration of the Jewish nation from their captivities and the extended dominion of the kingdom of David, which evidently have an ultimate reference to the final conversion of the Jewish people and the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom;—and, lastly, to that remarkable vision relative to the measuring of the Temple and the division of the holy land, which closes the prophecy of Ezekiel². This prophecy, although it was probably designed, in its immediate application, for the guidance and direction of the Jews on their restoration from the Babylonish captivity in the re-building of their Temple, yet is evidently intended, in its more remote fulfilment, to describe some state of the Christian Church at a very distant period, and probably quite at the close of the divine dispensations³. This is manifest, from its position in this book, in which it follows

² Ezek. chap. xl.—xlviii.

³ See the valuable remarks of Mr William Lowth contained in the *General Argument* prefixed to the last nine chapters of Ezekiel in his Commentary on this book; also the Preliminary Remarks on these chapters by Archbishop Secker, which are inserted by Archbishop Newcome in his *Commentary*, pp. 151—156. In this most valuable dissertation, the learned Prelate strongly maintains that this vision had reference to the re-building of the Temple on the return of the Jews from their captivity: yet, remarking upon the *spiritual* import of the vision of waters in chap. xlvii. he says,

that “the building of the Temple, and the rules about worship, and about the Prince, may be literal, and belong to Judaism, and this of the waters belong chiefly to Christianity.” “But then,” he observes, “the division of the land cannot well be both literal and true; for few of the twelve tribes returned, and we have no ground to think that any such division was made to those that did. Nor yet did their sins hinder these things. For, as was mentioned above, it is in this vision foretold they should not sin.” *Ib.* p. 156. These things are sufficient to establish the spiritual character of the prophecy contained in this vision.

other prophecies, which have an obvious reference to distant and important events in the Christian dispensation¹—from some parts of it, for instance, the vision of waters in the forty-seventh chapter, which evidently have a spiritual meaning and import²,—and from other parts, which never had any literal fulfilment after the return of the Jewish people to the land of Canaan.

(2) Again, there are others amongst the ancient prophecies, which, from the vast range which they occupy,—extending quite to the close of the divine dispensations,—must necessarily be both indistinct in many of their peculiar features, and incomplete in their details. And although, with respect to most of these prophecies, we derive from those parts of them which have been already fulfilled, strong grounds of belief that the unfulfilled portions of them will have their accomplishment at some future period; yet, from considering the peculiar character of these prophecies, we may derive reasonable grounds for believing, that God would vouchsafe some future revelation of his will, in which the indistinct parts of them would be more completely cleared up; and those parts of them, in which the details are at present necessarily imperfect, would be more fully and more perfectly illustrated.

The force of these remarks may be abundantly illustrated from different prophecies of the Old Testament: and we derive a striking illustration of them from one of the earliest prophecies in

¹ For instance, chapters xxxvi—vii, which evidently relate to the final conversion of the Jews to Christianity; and chapters xxxviii—ix, which evidently have reference to the latter ages

of the world. Comp. Rev. xx. 7—10, &c.; and see W. Lowth's Preface to these chapters.

² See W. Lowth on Ezek. xlvii. 4, 5.

the Bible, namely, the prophecy of Noah with regard to his posterity, which is contained in Gen. ix. 25—27. "*Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth; and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.*"

Now the fulfilment of the *temporal* part of this prophecy is very evident,—in the servile condition of the descendants of Canaan, and in their subjection both by the descendants of Japheth and of Shem; in the great enlargement of those nations who constitute the descendants of Japheth, and in their settlement, in different ways and at different periods in the tents of Shem. The fulfilment also, to a limited extent, of the *spiritual* part of it is no less evident, in the *spiritual* blessings which God has vouchsafed to the posterity of Shem³; and in his *dwelling*⁴ for so many ages amongst his peculiar people; by which he was especially distinguished as *the God of Shem*. If such, therefore, be obviously the *spiritual* object and purport of the first part of this prophecy, it seems impossible to affix any other than a spiritual interpretation to the remainder, in which it is declared, that *God shall enlarge Japheth, and shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*

Whether, however, we regard it in a *temporal* light, as prophetic of the conquest of the Eastern nations by the descendants of Japheth, or, what is more probably the true interpretation of the pro-

³ See Bishop Patrick ad locum, and Bishop Newton's Exposition of this prophecy.

⁴ Exod. xxv. 8; xxix. 45; 1 Kings vi. 12, 13.

phcey, of the conversion of these nations to the faith of Christ through the agency of the descendants of Japheth, the fulfilment of this prophecy involves many intermediate events; for instance, the overthrow of the Mahomedan power, and other things which have been made the subjects of subsequent prophecy.

The *object* of the original prophecy is clear and determinate: but it derives additional interest from considering it with relation to those subsequent prophecies which are connected with the same subject; and, which, as far as we are able to comprehend them, will lead us to some knowledge of the train of events, by which it may please God to bring about the fulfilment of this wonderful prophecy¹.

An attentive examination of the prophecies of the Old Testament will furnish us with many similar instances in illustration of this point: the only difficulty consists in the selection. But perhaps the concluding chapters of the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, and the greater part of the prophecies of Daniel, are amongst the most striking. In the seventh chapter of the prophet Daniel², the rise and duration of the great anti-christian apostacy is clearly foretold; but not with that distinction of circumstances and events, which might be reasonably expected; and which we actually have presented to us in the subsequent prophecies of St Paul³ and St John in the Apocalypse: and a com-

¹ The remarks of Vitringa on this prophecy are very valuable. He shews, in a clear and convincing manner, its *spiritual* character; though I have ventured to believe it applicable to *future* and *distant* events in the Chris-

tian Church, which Vitringa does not appear to have had immediately in view.

² vii. 7, 8, 19—25.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 3—5, 8—11.

parison of these prophecies of Daniel with those of St Paul and St John afford a good illustration of the *additional* light, which the more obscure intimations of ancient prophecy are capable of receiving from later and more clear revelations.

But still, amidst the obscurity in which the more distant parts of these prophecies are involved,—extending even to the close of the divine dispensations,—we derive great confirmation to our faith from the consideration of those parts which are already fulfilled; of which the evidence is so strong, that we may look forward with confidence to the final accomplishment of the remainder. This is the case with the line of prophecy which is contained in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the book of Daniel, of which the evidence of the fulfilment of the former part is so strong⁴; while we must acknowledge that the latter part has reference to events, which are connected with a very remote period of the divine dispensations, and of which the exact meaning can only be discovered by their fulfilment.

Again, with regard to the prophecies which are contained in the concluding part of the book of the prophet Ezekiel, upon examining the constitution and character of this prophecy, we find that the conversion of the Jews, and their final restoration to their own land,—a subject which is indeed continually kept in view, and brought prominently forward in other parts of this prophecy⁵—forms the subject of the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters; after this, in the thirty-eighth and thirty-

⁴ Compare the annotations of Mr W. Lowth on the first part of the eleventh chapter of the book of Daniel.

⁵ See particularly chap. xxxiv.

ninth chapters, there is described, under the names of Gog and Magog, some grand assault upon the Christian Church by the enemies of the truth, which will meet with a signal overthrow; and in conclusion, from the fortieth chapter inclusive to the end of the book, under the figurative description of the measuring of the temple and the division of the holy land, and the vision of waters in the forty-seventh chapter, (which, as we have seen, can only be understood in a *spiritual* sense,) is probably described a peaceful and flourishing state of the Church to the end of all things.

It must be admitted, however, that, for many ages after its delivery, and probably till the spreading of the Christian religion had thrown some light over the subject, the object and intent of this prophecy must have been involved in great obscurity. Let us, however, compare it with some of the parallel prophecies, to which allusion has been already made.

In the sixty-sixth chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah, (verses 15, 16,) a great destruction of God's enemies is foretold: and this follows the general conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, which forms the great subject of the prophecy of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter inclusive to the end of the book;—interspersed, indeed, with allusions to such a triumphant state of religion, as it is scarcely possible for us to look forward to in this world¹.

Parallel to this appears to be the prophecy of the destruction of God's enemies in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is described by Joel, (chap. iii. 2, 9—16); which destruction, we know, will be sub-

¹ Compare I.x. 18—20; L.xv. 17—25; and L.xvi.

sequent to the general conversion of the Gentiles, which is foretold in the close of the second chapter, (ii. 28—32); and of the Jews, which is the subject of the opening of the third chapter, (iii. 1): and this will be followed by a peaceful and prosperous state of the Church; which is described in the close of the same chapter, and also by Isaiah in the conclusion of his prophecy, (chap. Lxvi. 19—24). In the same manner, a similar destruction of God's enemies is foretold by Zechariah (chap. xiv. 1—2, 12—15), which is subsequent to the conversion of the Jews²; and this will, in like manner, be followed by a peaceful and flourishing state of the Church, (xiv. 16—21): and similar to these are the events which appear to be alluded to by Daniel, in the close of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth chapter³. We may therefore probably conclude, from a comparison of these different prophecies, that the present existing state of things will be followed by a general, or at least a considerable conversion of the Gentile nations;—that this, again, will be followed by the overthrow of the great anti-christian powers and the conversion of the Jews; and probably, as we may collect from a comparison of the different passages of Scripture relating to this subject, their restoration to their own land⁴;—that to this will succeed a prosperous state of the Christian Church;—that this time of peace and prosperity will be again followed by a general attack of the anti-christian powers on the Church; which will, in

² Compare Zech. xii. 9—14, xiii. 1, 2.

³ Dan. xi. 40—45, xii. 1; and compare particularly chap. xii. 7.

⁴ This does appear to be implied

in the different passages in the prophetical books, which relate to the restoration of the Jews. See W. Lowth's notes on the prophetical books *passim*.

their turn, experience a signal overthrow¹: after which we may look forward to a peaceful state of religion "till the time of the end."

This *appears* to be the *general* view of the progress of events in the Christian Church, as it may be collected from a comparison of these different prophecies. But with regard to the particular periods, when all these different events will be accomplished, and many other interesting particulars connected with them, we can form no positive judgment: nay, it is expressly declared that they are "sealed up" and concealed from our knowledge at present; and we are commanded to wait for their full developement in God's own time with patient faith and expectation². With regard however to the *general tenor* of these prophecies, we may be satisfied from the assurance both of St Paul and of our Redeemer himself, that "blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in³," and that "Jerusalem must be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled⁴." But the events foretold are so important, and they are so intimately connected with the patient exercise of our faith in the promises of God, that we may reasonably look to some more complete developement of them under some subsequent dispensation of prophecy, such as that which is contained in the Apocalypse; in which those parts, which are at present involved in obscurity, will be made more clear; and the course of events, which may lead to these important results, will be more fully explained and foretold.

¹ See W. Lowth's note on Isai. lxxvi. 16.

² Dan. xii. 8—13. ³ Rom. xi. 25.

⁴ Luke xxi. 24.

This is perfectly consistent with the general analogy of prophecy; of which it is one peculiar characteristic, that the older and more obscure prophecies are often elucidated by later and more explicit revelations. It is a general characteristic of those prophecies, which relate to the first coming of our Saviour and the bringing in of the Christian dispensation, that they grow more clear as they advance towards the period of their accomplishment. We may therefore reasonably expect, with respect to those prophecies which regard the more distant events of the Christian dispensation, that the want of distinctness, which must necessarily belong to the older prophecies, would be made more clear by subsequent revelations; revelations, which would be better appreciated and more clearly understood, when the *first* objects of the former prophecies were accomplished by the promulgation of the Gospel, and the appearance of those great anti-christian powers; of which the destruction, (though, until explained by further revelations, the subject is involved in considerable obscurity,) constitutes so important a feature in ancient prophecy.

(3) Another remark, which may be made with respect to the ancient prophecies, relates to the impossibility, with respect to many of them, of fixing the exact period of their commencement and their termination. There are some prophecies, for instance, those relating to the Babylonish captivity, of which the commencement is dated from different periods⁵; and which therefore imply more than one termination. There are others, again, of which the fulfilment is gradual, and of which therefore, the exact period of

⁵ See W. Lowth on Jerem. xxv. 11, and Zech. i. 12.

their commencement can never be exactly defined. But it is also true of *other* prophecies, which may be said to be of a more definite character; of which the prophecy of our Saviour's coming, which is contained in the *weeks* of Daniel, affords a remarkable instance. This prophecy, if any, may be said to mark out a *definite* period of accomplishment. Yet notwithstanding all the evidence of its fulfilment *about* the time predicted, *who* can presume to fix the *exact* period of its commencement? or to place beyond all doubt the difficulties which attend the interpretation of the close of this prophecy? *Still less* then, may we expect to fix the *exact period*, either of the commencement or the termination of other prophecies, which embrace a much longer period, and in which the true nature and character of the events foretold are involved in much greater difficulty; such as the periods of 1260, 1290, and 1335 days of the prophet Daniel¹. With regard to these prophecies, the prophet himself was assured by the Divine Author of them, that they were "closed up and sealed unto the time of the end²;" and he was enjoined by the same supreme authority to wait in faith and patience for their accomplishment. "Go thy way, till the end be: for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days³." With regard to the general character of the events involved in these different periods, we may collect it from a consideration of the prophecies which contain them: but with regard to the particular *period*, as well as the *mode* of their accomplishment, it is evident that they are hidden, as they were intended to be, in impenetrable darkness.

¹ Dan. xii. 7, 11, 12.

² Ib. xii. 9.

³ Ib. xii. 13.

(4) Another question connected with this inquiry, which deserves our attentive consideration, relates to the *extent*, to which *temporal* events, and the fates and fortunes of *temporal* kingdoms are made the subject of ancient prophecy.

If we examine the prophecies of the Old Testament with reference to this point, we shall find that the affairs of temporal kingdoms are made the subject of ancient prophecy, only as far as they fell within the range of Jewish observation, or were connected with the fortunes of the Jewish people. In the revelation, which God made to Abraham with respect to the remote judgment upon Egypt and the Ammonites, (Gen. xv. 14, 16,) and the nearer judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah; it was connected, in the case of the former nation, with their cruelty and oppression towards God's peculiar people; and of the latter, with their great and abandoned wickedness.

In the Mosaic æra, we may observe the like union of the Pagan subject with the more immediate subject of prophecy, in the prophecies which were uttered by Balaam with regard to the Amalekites, the Kenites, and the Assyrians⁴. The destruction, which is denounced by subsequent prophets upon the neighbouring nations, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Philistines, as well as upon the greater kingdoms of Tyre, of Egypt, of Assyria and Babylon⁵, is expressly declared to be in punishment of their impiety, their idolatry, and their oppression of God's chosen people.

In the same manner, some of the greatest conquerors of antiquity are expressly described as in-

⁴ Numbers xxiv. 17—22.

⁵ Comp. Ezek. xxv—xxxii.

struments in the hand of God, for carrying into effect the purposes of his Almighty will, in connection with his great designs for the salvation of the world. It is the case with Cyrus and with Alexander¹, who are so clearly and expressly pointed out in prophecy, in connection with this object; and of whom the former, by his conquests, led the way to the return of the Jewish people from their captivity at Babylon; and the latter, to that general dispersion of the Jews in every nation under heaven, by which the knowledge of the one true God was dispersed through the world; and with it the knowledge of those prophecies which, at the period of our Saviour's coming, had raised so general an expectation of his appearance. In like manner, when God employed Sennacherib to punish the rebellion of his chosen people, he expressly mentioned the *purpose* for which he so employed him; and declared, that, when he had answered the purposes of divine providence, *he* would be punished in return for his tyranny and cruelty. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Sion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks²:" and thus also (Jerem. xxv. 9, xxvii. 6); the Almighty calls Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, *his servant*, with reference to the judgments, of which he was the instrument in his hand.

It is worthy of observation also, that, out of *six* several captures of Jerusalem by Shishak, (1 Kings, xiv. 25), the Babylonians, Antiochus, Pompey, Herod and Titus, only *two* are made distinguished subjects

¹ Isai. xlv. 28, xlv. 1. Dan. vii. 6, viii. 7, 8, xi. 3, 4.

² Isai. x. 5, 12.

of prophecy; the *first* and the *last*. The *reason* of which is thus assigned by an eminent writer; that "prophecy was intent only on those *two greater judicial visitations* of the Hebrew people, in *one* of which their *captivity*, in the *other* their *final rejection*, were involved; the superior importance of these two visitations, in the scheme of divine government, sufficiently indicating the reason why they are selected for the subjects of a copious prophetic revelation, the former of them in the Old Testament, the second in the New³." And, in like manner, with regard to the prophecy which is contained in the eleventh chapter of the prophet Daniel, relating to the successors of Alexander, it may be observed, that only *two* of the *four* sovereigns, amongst whom his dominions were divided, are mentioned in this chapter, namely, the king of the north and the king of the south, by whom are understood the kings of Syria and of Egypt. "These two kings," observes Mr William Lowth, "came at length to have the principal share of Alexander's dominions, and make the greatest figure amongst his successors. But the reason why they only are mentioned here, is, because they only were concerned in the affairs of the Jews: Judæa bordering upon each of their dominions; and belonging sometimes to one, sometimes to the other of those princes⁴." The great empires also, which form the subject of the prophecies of Daniel, were all of them closely connected, either with the fates and fortunes of the Jewish people, or with the future destinies of the Christian Church⁵.

³ Davison on Prophecy, p. 413.

⁴ Lowth on Dan. xi. 5.

⁵ "The reason," observes Mr W. Lowth, "why the Spirit of God takes

notice of these monarchies rather than any others, is, because God's people were subjects to these monarchies as they succeeded one another: and in their

It is of the utmost importance to keep these observations in view, in forming our estimate of the object and intention with which the fates and fortunes of temporal kingdoms are introduced amongst the higher and more important subjects of ancient prophecy.

(5) Another thing, which ought to be attended to, in considering the subject of ancient prophecy, is—the *genius and character of the prophetic style*. This is indispensably necessary to the proper interpretation of the Apocalypse, considered as a *continuation* of the ancient prophecies; and as being designed, both to *fill up* what was *wanting* in ancient prophecy, and to *carry it on* to the close of the divine dispensations. For the prophetic style is not composed of arbitrary symbols, which are adopted without reason, and are uncertain in their application; but, as has been observed by an eminent writer, “*is constructed on such principles as make it the subject of just criticism and rational interpretation*”¹.

The imagery of ancient prophecy consists of symbols, which are taken from the heavenly bodies, as the sun, moon, and stars; or from the rest of the visible works of nature, as animals, mountains, seas, rivers and the like; or from the arts and sciences, customs and practices of men; or, lastly, from the Mosaic economy; as the Temple, the Tabernacle, and other matters contained in the writings of Moses, and

their succession, a line of time is carried on to the coming of Christ, who was to appear in the time of the fourth monarchy, and the countries belonging to it were to be the chief seat of Christ's kingdom; as Mr Mede observes in his

Dissertation on this subject. (*Works*, pp. 908—910.) *Comment. on Daniel*, ii. 40.

¹ Hurd *On the Prophecies*, Sermon ix. p. 90; in which the subject of the *Prophetic style* is investigated.

in the history of the republic and religion of the Jews².

The same imagery distinguishes the figurative language of the Apocalypse; except that it is, perhaps, applied in a bolder manner and with a deeper colouring in this *last* than in the *former* prophecies³. And this was to be expected from the nature of the subject: because,—the *former* dispensation being typical of that *later* one, which was to follow it, and in which the types and shadows of the *former* dispensation were to have their accomplishment,—we cannot be surprised at finding an uniformity of style and colouring in the prophecies belonging to each dispensation; and that these should rise in sublimity and power, as the prophecy, in which they are found, spoke with greater clearness on those awful and sublime events, which constitute the great subject of prophecy under *both* dispensations!

(6) Lastly, in applying the prophecies of the Old Testament to the illustration of the Apocalypse, we ought to form a due estimate of the *spiritual* character of ancient prophecy. This will appear from considering what was the great object of prophecy from the beginning,—which was to prepare mankind for the coming of the promised Redeemer; and from its close connexion with the Jewish dispensation, which *itself* was only typical of that better dispensation which was to follow it; and of which the ceremonies, the priesthood, and the sacrifices had *all* of them reference to some fulfilment under the more sublime and spiritual dispensation of the Gospel.

² Lancaster's *Preliminary Discourse to his Commentary on the Revelation of St John*, pp. 4—8.

³ See Hurd *On the Prophecies*, Sermon ix. pp. 113, 114.

In support of this view of the end and objects of the former dispensation, we have the infallible authority of the Redeemer himself, and of the inspired writers of the preceding books of the New Testament ; and, by thus viewing the Apocalypse in connexion with prophecies of the old dispensation, we shall not only arrive at more just ideas of the spiritual character of ancient prophecy ; but shall be enabled to apply it, with greater justice and truth, to the illustration of the language and the subject of that last and most interesting prophecy, which comprehends the fates and fortunes of the Christian Church to the great consummation of all things.

CHAPTER III.

THE APPLICATION OF THE ARGUMENT CONTAINED IN THE
PRECEDING CHAPTER TO THE INTERPRETATION OF
THE PROPHECIES OF THE APOCALYPSE.

HAVING thus considered the leading objects and distinguishing characteristics of ancient prophecy, we will now consider them with reference to their application to the Interpretation of the Prophecies of the Apocalypse.

I. In the first place, with regard to the great object of ancient prophecy,—*the coming of the promised Redeemer*,—this, we have seen, was the great subject of prophecy, both *before* the Law and *under* the Law. It was the great object of faith to the holy men of old, who lived *before* the giving of the Law; it was the great object of prophecy *under* the Law; and was the principal end of all those rites and ceremonies of the Jewish Law, which though, with reference to the immediate purpose of their institution, they were ordained for *temporary* purposes, had a continual relation to that better and more perfect dispensation which was to follow it. If *this* object of prophecy, therefore, was so clearly developed *before* the coming of our Saviour, much more may we expect that it should be so *afterwards*,—under a dispensation, the great object of which was the perfecting of the objects of the *former* and *more imperfect* dispensation; and in a book, of which the main object is to carry on the

great scheme of prophecy to the close of the divine dispensations.

II. But there are other things which have been remarked in connection with ancient prophecy, of which—

1. The *first* is—the *agency of the Redeemer in the prophecies of the old dispensation*. This, as we have seen, is a distinguishing feature in the dispensation of ancient prophecy. Much more then, may we expect to find it employed in the prophecies of that dispensation, in which the character and attributes of that Divine Being are so fully and clearly revealed; and in furtherance of his purposes of mercy towards that “Church which he hath purchased with his own blood¹,” and of which he *then* became more especially “the Head²,” when “he was exalted to the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto him³.”

2. Another point to be considered, is the light which we may expect to derive in the interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, from considering the peculiar characteristics of ancient prophecy.

(1) And, in the first place, with regard to those prophecies which speak *directly* of the Redeemer and his kingdom,—we may expect to find *these* brought forward in the same manner, and with still greater clearness, in a subsequent dispensation of prophecy. But there is also another description of prophecies, in which, under the cover of highly figurative language, the future events of the Christian Church are foretold. Many of these prophecies in the Old Testament looked to a *double* fulfilment. In the Apocalypse

¹ Acts xx. 28.

² Col. i. 8.

³ 1 Pet. iii. 22.

they can, for the most part, have but *one* fulfilment in view; and although this *last* prophecy may be expected to throw a clearer light over the object and purport of the ancient prophecies, yet we may be often guided to the true interpretation of the *later*, by a proper consideration of the *former* prophecies. For instance, there are many prophecies in the Old Testament, which have a view to a nearer, as well as a more remote fulfilment; and of which the nearer fulfilment is evidently declared, by the symbols which are employed, to have a spiritual character belonging to it. If, therefore, we meet with a prophecy in the New Testament distinguished by the same symbols, it evidently stamps a spiritual character on such a prophecy.

(2) Again, with regard to those prophecies of the Old Testament, which look forward to very distant events in the Christian Church, and which, for many ages after their delivery, were necessarily (as indeed they were intended to be) obscure;—as, on the one hand, we may reasonably look forward to some more complete developement of the object and intent of these prophecies in a subsequent dispensation of prophecy, so will the character of the *earlier* predictions often throw a clear and an interesting light over the object and intention of the *later* prophecies. Thus, in the ancient prophecies, we find distinct predictions of great prosperity and an immense extension of the true religion in the world; and, again, of great reverses and lamentable corruptions, which will oppose and obstruct the free progress of its blessings to mankind. Now, as we may expect to derive a clearer light, in ascertaining the peculiar character of these changes, from

future prophecies; so also may we often arrive at a better comprehension of some of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, which are at present attended with great difficulties,—by comparing them with the corresponding prophecies of the Old Testament: by which they will be proved to have an evident reference to some great and important, though probably distant, events connected with the Church and kingdom of the Redeemer.

The consideration also of the manner in which the *later* prophecies *enlighten* the more *obscure* parts of the *ancient*, and complete the chain of events which appears either to be broken or interrupted in the former prophecies,—at the same time that it throws a clear light over the whole subject of prophecy with regard to its great and leading object under both dispensations,—increases the interest and the force of the evidence which we derive from it; and it is a description of evidence, which may be expected to increase in clearness and strength, the more the events of the Christian Church are unfolded.

(3) Another remark which has been made with regard to many of the ancient prophecies, is—the impossibility of fixing the exact period either of their commencement or their termination; and this was illustrated by a reference to some of the prophecies of Daniel. Now prophecies of this kind occur in still greater number in the Apocalypse. We cannot be surprised, therefore, if they should be involved in a similar obscurity, with regard to the precise period of their commencement and their termination,—especially those which are yet unaccomplished, and which relate to great changes in

the Christian Church depending on causes, of which the operation must necessarily be gradual. It is enough for us, if the later prophecies place in a clearer light the true meaning and scope of the more ancient; and enable us to form a more accurate judgment with regard to the *probable* manner and period of their accomplishment.

(4) The next point to which allusion was made, in considering the peculiar characteristics of ancient prophecy,—namely, the *extent* to which the affairs of *temporal* kingdoms are made the subject of prophecy,—is very important considered with reference to the interpretation of the Apocalypse; because on the determination of this question must in a great measure depend the truth of the systems of those interpreters, who have, either altogether or in a great measure, looked to *temporal* events and the affairs of *temporal* kingdoms for the accomplishment of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

Now it appears, from the consideration of the ancient prophecies, that temporal events are not alluded to, nor are the affairs of temporal kingdoms mixed up with the subjects of ancient prophecy, any farther than as they were calculated to afford instruction to the chosen people, or were connected, either with the fates and fortunes of this people, or with the destinies of the Christian Church. This is true with respect to all the ancient prophecies in general, but particularly those of Daniel, in which the greatest empires which ever existed are made the prominent subjects of prophecy; but it is only in connection with, and *in subordination* to that, which was the main subject of his prophecy,—the history of the chosen people, and the rise, the pro-

gress, the corruption, and the final triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom.

If such, therefore, be the reason of the introduction of temporal subjects into ancient prophecy, much more may we expect to find it in the prophecies of the Apocalypse, especially when we consider what is the great subject of it, namely, the history and destinies of the Redeemer's kingdom; and that this subject, as it may be expected to occupy a more prominent place in the scheme of Christian prophecy, so must it necessarily, in a great measure, exclude other subjects which are not immediately connected with it.

(5) Again, another remark which was made with regard to ancient prophecy, relates to the peculiarity of *the genius and character of the prophetic style*: and this peculiarity, it was remarked, is common to the prophecies of the Old and the New Testament, as well as of the Apocalypse. It is evident, therefore, that one great source of illustration of the language and imagery of the Apocalypse must be derived from the language and imagery of ancient prophecy, and of the preceding prophecies of the New Testament; which, as they were delivered either by our Saviour himself, or by those who were inspired and commissioned by him, serve at once to illustrate the prophetical language of the Old Testament, and to justify us in our application of it to the Apocalypse. And the same remark may be made with regard to the application, which has been made of the prophecies of the Old Testament by the inspired writers of the New, and to the evidence which we derive from them with regard to the typical character of the Levitical dispensation, the imagery of which con-

stitutes the basis of so large a portion of the imagery and language of the Apocalypse.

(6) The *last* remark which was made connected with the prophecies of the Old Testament, was with regard to *the spiritual character of ancient prophecy*. And if it is necessary to keep this subject continually in view, in order that we may form an accurate judgment of the true genius and character of *ancient* prophecy, how much more when it is considered with reference to the prophecies of the Apocalypse,—which derives its greatest beauty and interest from its connection with the progress and prospects of religion to the end of all things, and from the assurance, which it gives us, of the future triumphs and glories of the Church;—subjects which are described in sublime, though dark and mysterious language, by the Prophets under the old dispensation, but of which the more complete development was suited to that book, of which the great object was to give a prophetic view of the progress of the great scheme of man's redemption to its final completion in the glories and the happiness of eternity!

Such appear to be the principles by which we must arrive at the true meaning and purport of the prophecies of the Apocalypse: and surely it opens a sublime and magnificent view of this mysterious book, when we regard it as a continuation of the great scheme of ancient prophecy, as it is connected with the kingdom of the Redeemer, from the beginning of the divine dispensations; and as carrying it on to the time, “when the mystery of God shall be finished¹.” Such a view of this wonderful book,—

¹ Rev. x. 7.

at the same time that it enables us to avoid the difficulties which encumber the opinions of those persons, who would apply it to objects unworthy of such a revelation,—affords the best answer to the charges of inconsistency, which may be reasonably urged against the systems of those persons who apply the prophecies of the Apocalypse to *temporal* objects; and to events, which, however great in themselves, must be regarded as of minor importance, when they are considered with reference to the fates and fortunes of that kingdom which is from everlasting to everlasting.

Compared with these objects, the destinies of the greatest empires sink into nothingness in the sight of Him, “with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day;” and, on the other hand, what *we* account as nothing, may, for reasons unknown to us, be deemed by the Almighty Father worthy of the attention of his prophets from the foundation of the world. “Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the dust of the balance¹.” Indeed, we appear to degrade the scheme of prophecy below the station which it occupies in the oracles of God, and to involve the application of it in great uncertainty, when—overlooking that which is the great end and object of prophecy, and the intimate connection and uniformity which we may believe to pervade *this*, as well as all the other divine dispensations,—we apply the prophecies of the Apocalypse to *persons* and *objects*, which do not appear to have been intended to be comprehended in it, or to have any necessary connection with that religion, of which the great, and indeed

¹ Isai. xl. 15.

the sole object, is—the spiritual happiness and the eternal destinies of man. Indeed, how magnificent does the whole scheme of prophecy appear, when we consider its extent, the dignity of the Person who is the great subject of it, and the sublime objects which it involves, to the final close of the divine dispensations: and how sublime is the view which we take of the oracles of God, when we behold the Prophets fearlessly appealing, for the truth of their predictions, to the prescience and the omnipotence of Him, “who declares the end from the beginning²,” and makes the most intricate and amazing events, as well as the powers and destinies of the eternal world, subservient to one great end,—the fulfilment of the great and mysterious purposes of his Almighty will! But such a view of the prophetical character of the Apocalypse is also entirely opposed to the opinions of those interpreters, who would apply it to events which appear to have no necessary connection with the subject of it, when it is viewed as a continuation of the great scheme of prophecy relating to man’s redemption, and as carrying on that scheme through all the various changes and destinies of the Christian Church to the end of all things. For we cannot believe that this book of prophecy would be opened with so much solemnity and awe, unless it was for the purpose of unfolding events of the highest interest, and of unspeakable importance to man. This mode of considering the subject,—at the same time that it invests it with a character of interest, which is most attractive to those who take delight in the devout contemplation of the divine dispensations

² Isai. xli. 10.

relative to the great scheme of man's redemption,—throws a degree of light over the principal prophecies of the Apocalypse, which, without enabling us to penetrate into the exact nature of the events foretold, will enable us to comprehend, sufficiently for all purposes of faith, the leading subjects of these revelations. It will shew the connection between the prophecies of this book and many of the sublime, and yet, till they were enlightened by this additional revelation, dark prophecies of the Old Testament; and thus teach us to look upon it as the most explicit commentary upon the destinies of the Church, and the plainest exposition of God's decrees concerning mankind and the divine economy of their salvation through Jesus Christ¹. Indeed, that this is the true view of the prophetical character of this book, may be collected even from a cursory examination of it. Many events in the Christian Church, which are spoken of very concisely and obscurely in the preceding prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, are declared *distinctly* and *clearly* in the Apocalypse; and many, of which the details appear to be very incomplete and imperfect in the ancient prophecies, are marked out with much greater clearness and fulness than in former revelations. The reason is very obvious: "because," as has been observed by a learned writer, "this prophecy was intended to make up all the deficiencies of former prophecies, and indeed to give a complete system of the constitution and fates of the Church.... Thus, the destruction of the enemies of Christ in this world is very frequently set forth in the Old Testament as *one* accident; which nevertheless is clearly

¹ Compare Daubuz, *Preliminary Discourse*, p. 40.

distinguished by St John into several; especially those *two* great ones, of the old paganism, and of the subsequent corruptions of Christianity. Yea, and this latter is again subdivided; besides the subsequent destruction of several other enemies. And so the reward of the righteous is often mentioned as *one* event, which is clearly distinguished *here* into a *first* and *then* a *general* resurrection, with many such instances. Nay, even the Revelation contains predictions of many accidents involved, which are afterwards distinguished and explained²."

It is in perfect agreement with the most sober and judicious views of Scripture prophecy, to consider it as a growing evidence, which becomes clearer as it advances towards its accomplishment, and upon which every succeeding age throws some additional light. This mode of considering the subject of prophecy in general, is calculated to lead us to a modest, and yet an encouraging view of the great mass of unfulfilled prophecy; and, with respect to the *later* and more *obscure* prophecies—if we form our opinion of them by those which are already fulfilled, we shall be enabled to form a more correct judgment of their peculiar character, and at the same time possess a guarantee for their fulfilment. Indeed, when we look back upon the afflictions and trials, which the Church has passed through since the Redeemer left the earth and ascended up to heaven to the right hand of God; and consider the present state of religion in the world, and the troubles which still await it, before the purposes of the Almighty are fulfilled,—it was well worthy the benevolence and wisdom of the great Author of

² Daubuz, Ib. p. 41.

Christianity, to provide it with a dispensation of prophecy, in which—whatever difficulties may attend the explanation of particular parts of it,—both these trials and the triumphant deliverance of the Church out of them all, are so clearly and plainly revealed. When we consider the great corruptions of religion which overspread the world; and behold, on the one hand, the wide extending dominion of the Papal apostasy, and, on the other, the delusions of Mahomet enslaving so large a portion of mankind; and when we see so many nations, even in the present day, the slaves of degrading and debasing superstitions;—it required something extraordinary to support the faith and patience of the saints; to animate them in the discharge of their duty; and to teach them to look forward to that glorious time, when all the present *seeming* difficulties of the divine dispensations will be cleared up. And we ought to be thankful to our heavenly Father, who has revealed these things with a degree of clearness, which, at the same time that it is sufficient to *encourage faith*, is calculated to *repress presumption*, and to discourage us from searching with unhallowed curiosity into the future and secret purposes of the Almighty will.

There is one consideration, which we ought always to bear in mind with respect to the prophecies of the Apocalypse, namely, that the greater part of them remains yet to be fulfilled; and that, with respect to the most important of those which have been partially fulfilled, a very material part relates to times which are yet future. These considerations ought to teach us modesty in our speculations on these subjects: and this point is urged by Sir Isaac Newton

with great force and power in his Introduction to this mysterious book. "This prophecy," he observes, "is called the *Revelation*, with respect to the *Scripture of truth*, which Daniel was commanded to *shut up and seal, till the time of the end*¹. Daniel sealed it until the time of the end; and till that time comes, the Lamb is opening the seals: and afterwards the two witnesses prophesy out of it a long time in sackcloth, before they ascend up to heaven in a cloud. All which is as much as to say, that these prophecies of Daniel and John should not be understood till the time of the end: but then some should prophesy out of them in an afflicted and mournful state for a long time, and that but darkly, so as to convert but few. But in the very end, the prophecy should be so far interpreted as to convince many. *Then, saith Daniel, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*. For the Gospel must be preached in all nations, before the great tribulation and end of the world. The palm-bearing multitude, which come out of this great tribulation, cannot be innumerable out of all nations, unless they are made so by the preaching of the Gospel before it comes. There must be a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, before it can fall upon the toes of the Image, and become a great mountain and fill the earth. An angel must fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting Gospel, to preach to all nations, before Babylon falls, and the Son of man reaps his harvest. The two prophets must ascend up to heaven in a cloud, before the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ. It

¹ Dan. x. 21; xii. 4, 9.

is therefore a part of this prophecy, that it should not be understood before the last age of the world; and therefore it makes for the credit of the prophecy, that it is not yet understood. But if the last age, the age of opening these things, be now approaching, as by the successes of late interpreters it seems to be, we have more encouragement than ever to look into these things. If the general preaching of the Gospel be approaching, it is to us and to our posterity that those words mainly belong: *In the time of the end the wise shall understand, but none of the wicked shall understand. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein*¹.

“The folly of interpreters hath been to foretel times and things by this prophecy, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt. The design of God was much otherwise. He gave this and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men’s curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own providence, not the interpreter’s, be manifested thereby to the world. For the event of things predicted many ages before, will then be a convincing argument that the world is governed by providence.

“For as the few and obscure prophecies concerning Christ’s first coming were for setting up the Christian religion, which all nations have since corrupted; so the many and clear prophecies concerning

¹ Dan. xii. 4, 10. Rev. i. 3.

the things to be done at Christ's second coming, are not only for predicting but also for effecting a recovery and re-establishment of the long lost truth, and setting up a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness.

"The event will prove the Apocalypse; and this prophecy, thus proved and understood, will open the old prophets, and all together will make known the true religion and establish it. For he that will understand the old prophets must begin with this; but the time is not yet come for understanding them perfectly, because the main revolution predicted in them is not yet come to pass. In the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets: and then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever². There is already so much of the prophecy fulfilled, that as many as will take pains in this study, may see sufficient instances of God's providence: but then the signal revolutions predicted by all the holy prophets, will at once both turn men's eyes upon considering the predictions, and plainly interpret them. Till then we must content ourselves with interpreting what hath been already fulfilled³."

Having thus explained the principles, on which it appears that we ought to be guided in the examination of the Apocalypse, we will next proceed to the examination of the prophecy itself.

² Rev. x. 7; xi. 15.

³ Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations*

upon the Apocalypse of St John,
Chap. i. pp. 249—253.

CHAPTER IV.

EXAMINATION OF THE PROPHECIES OF THE APOCALYPSE.

PART I. SECT. I.

The Opening of the Apocalypse.

THE Apocalypse opens with a degree of solemnity, which is highly becoming the character of this book, as containing the last and closing series of prophecies, connected with the final accomplishment of the dispensations of the Almighty relative to the great scheme of man's redemption; and with a dignity which is eminently calculated to bespeak attention to the awful subjects which it contains.

The opening portion of the Apocalypse may be divided into three parts:

I. First, that which contains the title or inscription of the Book.

II. Secondly, that which contains the address or message to the seven churches of Asia, to which this portion of the Apocalypse is more particularly addressed.

III. And, thirdly, the glorious appearance of the Redeemer himself, and his commission to the Apostle St John.

CHAP. I. 1—3.

I. (1) The opening of the Apocalypse is as follows:

- 1 "THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant

John; who bare record of the Word of God, and of the tes-²
timony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed³
is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this pro-
phesy, and keep those things which are written therein: for
the time is at hand."

This book is here, in the very opening of it, designated by its title, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ;" who is at once the Author and the great Object of the Prophecy. But he is said, moreover, to have received this Revelation from "God the Father, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;" by which are meant those important events connected with the church and kingdom of the Redeemer, which, beginning from the time of the delivery of the prophecy, shall follow in rapid succession until their final consummation¹. This is in perfect agreement with the whole scheme of the Christian revelation, which is mediatorial throughout; and in which the Son, though equal in knowledge and in power to the Father, is constantly represented in Scripture as receiving *both* from Him². It was in this power that the Redeemer made his most astonishing revelations, and performed his greatest miracles: and it was in virtue of that universal power which was given unto him after his resurrection "in heaven and in earth," that he gave his commandment to his Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature³.

It was also, in like manner, from Him, the great Author and Object of prophecy from the beginning, that the Apostle of the Apocalypse derived his sacred commission to declare the important events, which it was his especial province to foretel; and by *his*

¹ See Woodhouse, Grotius, Vitringa, Mede, Daubuz.

² John iii. 35; v. 19, 27; viii. 28, 38;

xiv. 6, 10; Phil. ii. 9. Compare Woodhouse ad locum.

³ Matt. xxviii. 18—20; Mark xv. 16.

authority he pronounced this blessing on "him that readeth, and those that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: because the time is at hand¹."

II. The second division of the opening part of the Apocalypse contains the address or message to the seven churches of Asia.

CHAP. I. 4—8.

- 4 "JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be
unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and
which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before
5 his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness,
and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of
the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our
6 sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto
God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and
7 ever. Amen. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye
shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds
8 of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am
Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord,
which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Such are the terms in which the message is conveyed to the churches from the Eternal Father, who is, and who was, and who is to come; from the Eternal Spirit², and from the Redeemer himself; who is here represented under the glorious titles of "the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth." By the first of these titles he was spoken of prophetically by Isaiah³; such he was eminently in the last scene of his earthly life, when before Pilate he *witnessed* a good confession⁴; and such he also describes himself to the angel of the church of the

¹ With regard to the particular import of this expression, see Woodhouse ad locum.

² See Woodhouse ad locum, pp. 9—15, 16, 17. The remark of the Ve-

nerable Bede on the passage is as follows: "Unum Spiritum dicit septiformem, quæ est perfectio et plenitudo."

³ Chap. LV. 4.

⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 13.

Laodiceans,—“the faithful and true witness⁵.” But He is also spoken of as “*the first-begotten from the dead*,” with reference to that prophetic declaration of his resurrection, which God made by David, when he said of him, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee⁶,” and in conformity with the doctrine of St Paul, who, speaking with reference to the Redeemer, says of him, that he “was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead⁷.” Moreover, he is entitled “the Prince of the kings of the earth.” Such is the prophetic character of the Messiah in other parts of Scripture; and such he is declared to be in the sequel of this prophecy, when he appears as a triumphant conqueror, “and hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords⁸.”

“So that this salutation to the churches,” to use the words of Dean Woodhouse, “divested of its prophetic form, and of that imagery which had been derived to it from the scenery of the vision, will be found equivalent to the epistolary and plainer language of St Paul,—‘The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you⁹.’”

But why, in this passage, is the general order of Scripture inverted? Why is the Holy Spirit mentioned *before* the Son? “This,” as has been observed by the same excellent commentator, “may be in part accounted for from the impression remaining upon the imagination of the writer, after he had

⁵ Chap. iii. 14.

⁶ Psalm ii. 7; Acts xiii. 33.

⁷ Rom. i. 4.

⁸ Chap. xix. 16. See Woodhouse *ad locum*.

⁹ 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Woodhouse *ad locum*.

seen the vision. For in chap. iv. 5, where the symbol of the seven spirits was seen, it had appeared before the throne closely connected with the glory of the Father, and previously to the entrance of the Son under the emblem of the Lamb. Another reason may be," (and it is probably the great reason for the peculiar mode of its introduction in this passage,) "that the character and description of the Son is reserved separately for the last, there to be longer dwelt upon; because he appears throughout the vision to be the prime agent, and the grand object of the whole prophecy; he who, alone of the persons in the Godhead, has taken our human nature upon him, and visibly fought our battles against the common enemy. He is described to us here, 1st. as in his suffering state; when, having taken the lowly form of a servant, he bare *witness* to the truth. 2dly. As the first-fruits from the grave¹; when, triumphing over sin and death, he obtained the victory for his faithful followers. 3dly. As King of kings², when, fulfilling all the prophecies which predict the Messiah, he shall reduce all nations under his easy yoke, utterly subduing all usurped dominion. The two first of these offices and characters he hath already fulfilled; the first during his earthly life, the second at his resurrection; the last remains to be completed; and is peculiarly the subject of the prophecies in this book³."

Well, therefore, may the Apostle conclude with that sublime doxology, in which he has applied all those titles and attributes to the Redeemer, which most of all recommend him as the object of affectionate reverence, or of awe, to fallen man; when

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 20.

² 1 Tim. vi. 15.

³ Woodhouse, *Ib.*

we regard him as the merciful Redeemer and the all-powerful Judge of mankind! "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The endearing title of "him that loved us," is applied to the Redeemer by St Paul; and the rewards and privileges, which are the portion of true Christians, are described under the image of a kingdom in other parts of Scripture. "A kingdom is proposed for the servants of Christ⁵, and they are to reign with him⁶." In Exod. xix. 5, God promises to Israel that by obedience they shall become a "kingdom of priests, a peculiar treasure unto God above all nations, a holy nation." In Isaiah lxi. 6, this promise is extended to the Christian times and to the converted Gentiles, whom St Peter calls a holy nation, *a royal priesthood*; in which latter expression, as in the words of Moses, the two ideas of kings and of priests are brought together⁷. In the same manner, the terrors of his final advent, as they are here represented by St John, are aggravated by a reference to those passages both of the Old and the New Testament, in which he is described as "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven⁸,"—a subject of awful reflection to those, who are conscious that they have neglected, while repentance was possible, to look to him who "was pierced" on the cross for their transgressions⁹, and who died for their salvation.

⁴ Rom. viii. 37; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 4.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 34; Luke xii. 32.

⁶ 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Cor. iv. 8; vi. 2, 3.

⁷ Woodhouse ad locum.

⁸ Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxvi. 64, &c.

⁹ Zech. xii. 10; John xix. 37.

III. The last division of this opening portion of the Apocalypse relates to the glorious appearance of the Redeemer himself, and his commission to the Apostle John.

This portion of the subject is contained between the ninth verse and the end of the chapter.

I. 9—20.

9 "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God,
10 and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of
11 a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and
12 unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being
13 turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps
14 with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame
15 of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned
16 in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as
17 the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me,
18 saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.
19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which
20 are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

This last verse explains the meaning which is concealed under the figurative representation of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels, or bishops, of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven

churches. This is in perfect conformity with the general tenor of the prophetic language, in which the lights or teachers, and heads of the Church, are represented under the emblems of *stars*.

Under this symbol, Joshua, David, and Christ himself, are described¹: and the removal of such teachers is represented, in prophetic language, by the *stars* being removed, covered, darkened, and not giving their light². This vision of the seven candlesticks has its prototype in that of Zechariah, in which, under the image of a golden candlestick, is represented the Jewish Church³; a vision which is closely connected, in its spiritual signification, with this sublime vision of the Apocalypse⁴. For as Joshua was to Zechariah “a type or shadow of Jesus Christ our Saviour, as he is consecrated by God to be the author of everlasting salvation⁵,” so does the great Antitype, in this vision of the Apocalypse, appear clothed in the dress of a Priest,—a glorious, but affecting representation of that office, which he sustains for mortal man in the presence of his Father, as our great High Priest, “where he ever liveth to make intercession for us⁶.”

But, in comparing this glorified vision of the Redeemer in the Apocalypse with those which are represented in other parts of Scripture, the uniformity of them is very apparent. When he appeared to Daniel, his appearance was of “a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold. His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the

¹ Num. xxiv. 17; Dan. viii. 10; 2 Macc. ix. 10; Rev. xxii. 16.

² Ezek. xxxii. 8; Joel ii. 10; iii. 15; Matt. xxiv. 29, &c. Vide Woodhouse ad locum.

³ Zech. iv. 1, &c.

⁴ On this subject compare Dr Jackson, *Works*, Tom. II. Chaps. 21, 22. pp. 1008—1016.

⁵ Dr Jackson, *Ibid.* 1009.

⁶ Hebr. vii. 25.

appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude¹." When he appeared in glory on the mount of Transfiguration, we read that "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light²." In which passages, as has been observed, "we have all the original ideas which are represented in this vision of St John, but with that varied expression, which implies that St John's copy was not taken from these passages, but from the same kind of *original* which they had copied³." But if *this* vision of the Redeemer was accompanied by circumstances of terror, which did not attend that which was vouchsafed to the Apostles on the mount of Transfiguration⁴, (because at that time the Redeemer had not undergone those sufferings through which he was to pass to his glory); and under the influence of the surpassing glory of the *later* revelation, the Apostle, like his predecessor Daniel⁵, "fell down at his feet as dead;" yet, like *him*, he experienced, in a remarkable manner, the divine support; though accompanied with circumstances of consolation, which Daniel never knew, and which were derived from the peculiar circumstances attendant upon his incarnation,—from those painful sufferings and that triumphant resurrection, by which the Redeemer has overcome death and "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." What can be more full of comfort and consolation than the words, with which the Redeemer dispelled his fears?

¹ Dan. x. 5, 6.

² Matt. xvii. 2.

³ Woodhouse ad locum.

⁴ See the expression of St John illustrated by Woodhouse ad locum.

⁵ Dan. x. 7. 9.

"Fear not⁶; I am the First and the Last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death⁷!" Language sinks under the weight of ideas which are presented to the mind, when we contemplate the feelings of overpowering majesty and of unspeakable tenderness, which are inspired by this vision of our glorified Redeemer⁸!

Indeed when we connect his glorified appearance on this occasion, as the King of kings and Lord of lords,—on the one hand, with the thought of "that glory which he had with the Father before the world was,"—the glory which belonged to the divinity of his pre-existent state,—and, on the other, with that humiliation to which he submitted, when he divested himself of that glory, and was "made in the likeness of men;"—when we contrast the majesty and the eternity of Him, who is the First and the Last, with the voluntary sufferings of him who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;"—and when we, finally, behold the glorious power to which he is exalted at the right hand of God, thus employed in the support of his faithful servants, and in the direction and government of that "Church which he hath purchased with his own blood;"—what bounds can we place to our ideas of the ma-

⁶ Compare Dan. x. 12. Mr W. Lowth, in his note on Dan. x. 10, in which passage Daniel describes "a hand touching him," supposes that it has reference to some *created* angel, who was in attendance on the Logos. But why should it not be the Redeemer himself? The idea seems to be countenanced by this passage of St John.

⁷ Compare Isaiah xxii. 22; and see

the force of this allusion illustrated by Woodhouse *ad locum*.

⁸ "Who can read," observes Michaëlis, "if he reads without prejudice, the following address of Jesus to John, sinking to the ground through fear, and not be affected with the greatness of the thought and the expressions: "Fear not," &c. ver. 17, 18? Michaëlis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Chap. xxxiii. Sect. 10.

jesty and the mercy of that great Being, or of the unspeakable interest of those objects, for which the Son of God was made flesh, and humbled himself to the death of the cross!

PART I. SECT. II.

The Epistles to the seven Churches.

WE come, in the next place, to the consideration of the epistles,—which were sent by the Redeemer to the seven churches of Asia; and which constitute the subject of the second and third chapters of the Apocalypse. The consideration of these is very important; because they may supply us with some valuable rules for our guidance in the interpretation of the subsequent chapters of the Apocalypse.

CHAP. II. 1—7.

1. The first of these is the Epistle to the church in Ephesus:—

- 1 “UNTO the angel of the Church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:
- 2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast
- 3 found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and
- 4 for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left
- 5 thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of
- 6 his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou
- 7 hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

The church of Ephesus was the principal church in this part of Asia, and was the centre from which Christianity was propagated to the neighbouring countries. It had had the especial privilege of being the residence of St Paul for two years; of the superintending care of Timothy; and, lastly, of St John himself. The subjects especially alluded to in this epistle to the church of Ephesus, relate to *doctrine* and *practice*. (1) With regard to the *first*, the testimony of the great Head of the Church is favourable in the highest degree to the character of the church of Ephesus: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: *and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars*: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted." In this passage, allusion is probably made to some Judaizing or other heretical teachers, of whom St Paul spoke in his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, when he told them, that "of themselves men would arise, speaking perverse things, that they might draw away disciples after them¹;" and to whom he also makes more especial allusion in his Epistles to Timothy: from which we may collect, that this church was assailed by a variety of heretical teachers, who taught their "fables and endless genealogies," to the destruction of faith and charity. And with regard to the Nicolaitans, they appear, from all that is to be collected from history concerning them, to have been a description of heretics, resembling those who afterwards were known by the name of the Gnostics, professing the most dangerous

¹ Acts xx. 30.

doctrines, and profligate and abandoned in their lives¹. (2) But, secondly, they are charged with having "left their first love;" that is, with having deviated from that earnestness and zeal which marked the early period of their conversion to the faith of Christ². They are therefore enjoined to remember whence they are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; under a threat, that, if they delayed their repentance, their candlestick would be removed out of its place; and with a promise, that if they *did* return and repent, they should be made partakers of those rewards which their Redeemer, the second Adam, had secured for them,—even the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God³.

2. The next Epistle is addressed to the church of Smyrna; and this, like the former, relates to some corruptions of doctrine, which were attempted to be introduced by some Judaizing heretical teachers:

II. 8—11.

- 8 "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write;
 These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead,
 9 and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty,
 (but thou art rich;) and I know the blasphemy of them which
 say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of
 10 Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer:
 behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye
 may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be
 thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of
 11 life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith
 unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of
 the second death."

¹ See an account of the Nicolaitans and their opinions given by Woodhouse *ad locum*.

² Compare Jerem. ii. 2; where God, speaking of the early affection of his people towards him, says, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in

a land that was not sown. *Israel was holiness unto the Lord;*" &c. Perhaps the whole of this chapter of Jeremiah will afford the most explicit and instructive commentary that can be met with of this expression of St John.

³ See the whole of Dean Woodhouse's most valuable and instructive notes on the sixth and seventh verses.

With regard to the duration of this persecution, commentators differ; some understanding the expression of St John *literally*, others *typically*, to mean *ten years*, according to the usage of prophetic Scripture. Dean Woodhouse, however, upon considering the different explanations of the difficulty, thinks it, "on the whole, to be most probable, that the persecution, foretold in these words, was only of ten days, and was fulfilled in that generation; and that the Jews, who are described as acting against this Church, under the influence of Satan, were the authors of the persecution." And he gives the following judicious and satisfactory reasons for his opinion,—that "this prophecy, thus fulfilled, would serve a temporary purpose. It would convince the seven churches, that the Revelation, which foretold it, was from God; and that therefore the remaining predictions of the same prophet would also receive their completion; and it would occasion them to revere, and preserve, and faithfully to deliver down to posterity, the book in which they were contained; which they seem to have done⁴." It may perhaps serve to confirm this interpretation, to remark, that the figurative language, in which the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the preceding chapter, is dropped in the messages both to this church and to that of Ephesus, and that he is spoken of in the terms, which are found in numberless other passages of Scripture, as "the Spirit:" "Hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

3. The next Epistle is addressed to the church of Pergamos:—

⁴ See Dean Woodhouse's note ad locum.

II. 12—15.

- 12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;
 13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful
 14 martyr, who was slain among you¹, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things
 15 sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.”

“This city,” observes Dean Woodhouse, “is described by Strabo, Pliny, and Livy, to have been in their times a splendid metropolis, honoured and enriched by a long succession of the Attalian kings. A heathen city, of such a description, may be supposed to have been corrupt in doctrine and morals, and thus to have merited the appellation given to it by our Lord, ‘the throne of Satan.’ Its famous library, of two hundred thousand volumes, had rendered it a seat of Oriental learning, whence sprang the philosophy and vain deceit condemned by St Paul (Col. ii. 8); and the βάθη, or depths of Gnostical heresy, ascribed to Satan in the address to the church of Thyatira (chap. ii. 24); and this circumstance may have contributed also to its designation under this title².” Still, amidst all these temptations, and under circumstances of severe persecution and suffering, they had nobly undergone the fiery trial. The reproof of this church, however, is, that she had in her bosom some, who, like Balaam, (described in the 25th and 31st chapters of Numbers,) held such doctrines as would “turn the grace of God into lascivious-

¹ “No account has been transmitted to our times of this martyr; but Andreas Cæsariensis reports that he had seen

the history of his martyrdom.” Woodhouse.

² Woodhouse, *Annotations*, ad loc.

ness." This, by the Apostles Peter and Jude, is called following the way or error of Balaam. (2 Pet. ii. 10—15; Jude 4.)

There were others also, who, as in the church at Ephesus, had adopted the dangerous opinions of the Nicolaitans. They are charged, therefore, to repent.

II. 16, 17.

"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

Such are the weapons with which the Lord declares that he will carry on his warfare against the enemies of the truth: "I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" and such were the weapons with which St Paul instructed his Ephesian converts to contend against the enemies of their salvation: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*!" Such also are the rewards which are promised to those who with faith and patience endure the trial. They shall receive "the hidden manna,"—even that bread, which whosoever eateth shall live for ever⁴,—"the life which, at present, is *hid* with Christ in God," but which will be fully

³ Ephes. vi. 14—17.

⁴ John vi. 51.

manifested in that day, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, and when all his faithful servants shall appear with him in glory¹.

4. The fourth Epistle is addressed to the Church at Thyatira :—

II. 18—29.

18 “And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These
things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a
19 flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy
works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience,
20 and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Not-
withstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou
sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a pro-
phetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit for-
21 nication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave
her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit
adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent
23 of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and
all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the
reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you accord-
24 ing to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest
in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which
have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will
25 put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have
26 already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and
keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power
27 over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of
iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:
28 even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the
29 morning-star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the
Spirit saith unto the churches.”

The message to the church of Thyatira is of a purport similar to those which were sent to the preceding churches; and relates to the purity and integrity with which they had preserved their first faith. In this respect, the manner in which this church is spoken of is of the most gratifying character: “I know thy works, and charity, and service,

¹ Col. iii. 3, 4. See the excellent illustration of the expressions in ver. 17, which is given by Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." There were, however, persons connected with this church, who had induced some of its members to introduce different heathen corruptions into it, and to intermix heathen impurities with their religious services. Such were those who taught their followers "to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols;" practices which were expressly forbidden by the Apostolic council to the Gentile converts (Acts xv.); and of which we find traces in other churches². Many of these corruptions formed the distinguishing characteristics of some of the Gnostic sects; and they are here stamped with the opprobrious appellation of "the depths of Satan."

To those who held fast their Christian profession, and kept their works unto the end, is promised a participation in those glorious privileges which were given to the Redeemer himself as the reward of his sufferings and death. Such is the nature of the promise which is implied in the expressions: "To him I will give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in shivers:"—expressions which are borrowed from the second Psalm, and are prophetic of the spiritual kingdom of the Redeemer; a kingdom, of which it is expressly declared in the prophet Daniel, that "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints

² See 1 Cor. viii; Ephes. v. 3—12, and Whitby's notes ad locum. Some commentators interpret Jezebel, mentioned in ver. 20, of some person of distinction in the church of Thyatira, to whom the name of Jezebel might be

aptly applied. It is however applied, perhaps with more correctness, by Vitrings and Dean Woodhouse, to a sect of *false teachers*: and in this sense it was understood by the ancient commentators. See his notes ad locum.

of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him¹." But it is moreover declared of him that held fast to his Christian profession, "*And I will give him the morning-star.*" Now by *a star*, in the figurative language of Scripture, is meant *a teacher*². Our Lord is eminently such; such he entitles himself, chap. xxii. 16, "*the bright and morning-star*;" as such he was foretold by Balaam, (chap. xxiv. 17.); and it was a star which declared his birth to the Eastern sages. To this probably allusion is made in other passages of Scripture, in which the light of heavenly truth is represented under the images of "the day-star arising in the heart," and our being "visited by the day-spring from on high³." In this passage, the expression seems to import that knowledge of the mysteries of God, and particularly of the glorious issue of the great scheme of Redemption, which is promised, not only in this passage, but in other parts of the book of Revelation, to the faithful servants of God⁴.

The length, at which we have dwelt on the epistles to these churches, renders it unnecessary to dwell, in the same manner, on those which were directed to the three remaining churches of Sardis, of Philadelphia, and Laodicea. But, in thus passing them over with a cursory notice, it would be improper to omit alluding to the solemn warnings which they contain, both to churches and to individual Christians, against corruption and lukewarmness in their Christian profession,—warnings which are sufficient to make every serious person tremble; and the glorious promises, which they hold forth to all sin-

¹ Dan. vii. 27. See Woodhouse ad locum.

² 2 Pet. i. 19; Luke i. 78.

³ Compare Dan. xii. 10, and see Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

⁴ See Woodhouse on chap. i. 16.

cere and zealous Christians, to encourage them to diligence and earnestness in their religious practice, and in the maintenance of the great principles of their faith. But these opening chapters of the Apocalypse are worthy of all the attention which has been bestowed upon them; because they afford the best exposition of the great and leading objects of this mysterious prophecy, and the safest guide in the interpretation of its symbols and language; which have occasioned so much difficulty to commentators on the Apocalypse. This has been remarked by Dean Woodhouse; and by a close attention to the principles which he has derived from this source, he has been able to throw a clearer light than many of his predecessors on some of the most difficult parts of this book.

It will be important, with reference to the success of our future investigations, if we consider some of the conclusions, which we may derive from our examination of this part of the prophecy.

1. And, in the first place, with regard to the peculiar character of the style and language of the Apocalypse.

In all our previous arguments with respect to the Apocalypse, we have considered it as forming the continuation and conclusion of that great scheme of prophecy, which, having its origin immediately after the Fall, is carried on through the different stages of the divine economy of redemption,—the patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian dispensations,—to its final close. And both the circumstances attending the manifestation of the Redeemer to St John, as well as the language and the symbols which are employed in the opening chapters of this book,

bear testimony to this view of the Apocalypse. In the first place, with regard to the Redeemer himself,—he appears to the apostle, attended by the same circumstances of surpassing glory and majesty in which he appeared to the prophets of old, but with those additional distinctions which especially belong to him as the incarnate Son of God, and which are derived from his death, his resurrection, and his ascension into heaven; and from the characters which he now sustains, as the High Priest and Intercessor of his people,—the Lord and the Judge of mankind. When he especially proclaims himself as “Head over all things to his Church,” he describes himself with reference to the prophecy of Zechariah, as “walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks¹.” When he announces himself as the terrible avenger of ungodly and unfaithful men, he is described, expressly with reference to the prophecy of Isaiah concerning him, as “having a two-edged sword proceeding out of his mouth;” and with regard to the false teachers, he declares, that he will “fight against them with the sword of his mouth².” In the same manner, with reference to another prophecy of Isaiah, and in illustration of his own power as “having the keys of hell and of death,” he describes himself as “having the key of David; as he that openeth and no man shutteth; and that shutteth and no man openeth³.” Thus also the false teachers are described as belonging to the synagogue of Satan; as holding the doctrine of Balaam; and as, like Jezebel, in spiritual fornication⁴. In the same

¹ Chap. ii. 1, comp. with Zech. iv. 2.

² Compare chap. iii. 7; i. 18, with

³ Chap. i. 16; ii. 12, compared with
Isai. xix. 2: and see W. Lowth on
Isai. xlix. 1—3; xi. 4.

Isai. xxii. 22.

⁴ Chap. ii. 9, 14, 20.

manner, with regard to the rewards of the righteous, the Redeemer promises, that "to him that overcometh, he will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God;" that "he will give him to eat of the hidden manna;" that "he will give him power over the nations;" that "he will make him a pillar in the temple of his God'." These expressions illustrate the connection between the two dispensations: and, at the same time that they establish the spiritual character of the former dispensation, afford a valuable guide in the illustration of this prophecy.

2. In the second place, we derive from the *spiritual* character of the addresses to the seven churches which are contained in these chapters, a powerful argument in support of the belief of the spiritual character of the *whole* prophecy. These addresses relate principally to matters, either of faith or practice,—to the purity or the corruption of life and doctrine, which most distinguished those churches. The *rewards* which are promised to the *one* are entirely *spiritual*. The *judgments* which are denounced upon impenitence and unbelief, are *spiritual* also. To the *one* are promised the greatest rewards of heaven, and the highest glories of immortality. To the *other* are threatened the withdrawing of the divine countenance, and everlasting exclusion from the favour of God and the happiness of the blessed. The utmost extent to which *temporal* punishments are threatened to these churches, is, by "having their candlestick removed out of its place⁶," a judgment, the awful character of which can only be conceived, by beholding the awful reality in the pre-

⁵ Chap. ii. 7, 17, 26; iii. 12.

⁶ Chap. ii. 7.

sent condition of these churches, and of others, which were planted and watered by the apostles of the Lord. In the same manner, the weapons with which the enemies of the truth and the corruptions of the true faith are to be destroyed, are entirely spiritual. It is with reference to this idea, that the Redeemer is described in the first chapter¹, when it is said, that "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." In like manner he announces himself to the church of Pergamos, as "having the sharp sword with two edges²;" and he commands those who were guilty of maintaining false doctrines to "repent: or else he would come unto them quickly, and war against them with the sword of his mouth³." "This," observes Dean Woodhouse, "is the weapon by which our Lord and his followers are to conquer at the last; and therefore is again described in chap. xix. 15—21." In an eminent passage of the evangelical prophet, confessedly prophetic of our Lord, it is said, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Agreeably to which "the sword of the Spirit" is called by St Paul "the word of God;" and is the weapon with which, according to the same Apostle, even "with the spirit of his mouth, the Lord shall destroy the man of sin." And the powers of this warfare are again described: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

"These quotations from Holy Writ cast considerable light upon the passage before us, and shew the nature of the arms by which our Lord and his Church are to gain their victories; not by the usual instru-

¹ v. 16.

² Chap. ii. 12.

³ Ib. 16.

ments of human warfare; but the preaching of the word in evangelical purity and power⁴." We may add also, that they shew the way in which the great corruptions of Christianity and the abominations of heathenism are to be destroyed,—namely, by the propagation of that pure and holy faith, which is built on the foundation of eternal truth,—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever⁵.” In perfect conformity also with this doctrine, is the *object* for which, as upon *individuals*, so also upon *churches*, the divine judgments are inflicted, namely, to lead them to repentance and reformation. How much tenderness, and yet what solemnity, is contained in the warning addressed to the church of the Laodiceans: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent⁶.”

3. Another observation connected with these chapters relates to the prominent manner, in which the great doctrines of redemption are brought forward; and the affecting and majestic images, under which the Saviour himself is manifested to us, as the First-begotten of God, the Redeemer, the Lord, and the Judge of mankind! What can be more impressive and affecting than the manner, in which the most sublime and awful attributes of the Redeemer are brought forward from every part of Scripture, and accumulated in the opening of this wonderful prophecy. For example, in the opening of the address to the churches: “Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the Seven Spirits which are before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is

⁴ Woodhouse on chap. i. 16.

⁵ Hebr. xiii. 8.

⁶ Chap. iii. 19. Compare also Hebr. xii. 5—12.

the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty¹." And when the Apostle, overwhelmed with the surpassing majesty of this glorified vision of his Redeemer, fell down at his feet as dead,—what can be more affecting, or more agreeable to our best ideas of the tenderness and compassion of our omnipotent Saviour, than the manner in which he came to the support of his fainting servant, when he laid his right hand upon him, saying unto him, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death²." Again, when in promising his rewards to the righteous, he declares, that "to him that overcometh he will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God³;" that to him, who is "faithful unto death, he will give a crown of life⁴;" that he sends his judgments upon the churches, "that they may know that it is He, which searcheth the reins and hearts; and will give to every one according to his works⁵;" that "to him that over-

¹ Chap. i. 4—8.² Ib. ver. 17, 18.³ Chap. ii. 7.⁴ Chap. ii. 10.⁵ Ib. 23.

cometh he will grant to sit with him in his throne, even as he also overcame, and is set down with the Father in his throne⁶;"—what adequate ideas can we form of the majesty of him, who thus to the most sublime attributes of divinity, and to names and titles which can be applied to God alone, adds the possession of almighty power, and the dominion of the invisible world; or of the importance of that revelation, of which this glorious Being appears as the great Author and Messenger to man!

4. Lastly, this part of the prophecy is important, as shewing the origin of those various errors which make so melancholy and prominent a figure in the subsequent history of the Church; and will afford a valuable key to some of the subsequent prophecies which are contained in this book. "The mystery of iniquity" had already begun "to work⁷;" and the seeds were sown, even at this early period, of many of the most dangerous heresies, of which the fruit was afterwards seen in the greatest and most prominent corruptions of the Christian faith: and the fulfilment of the divine prophecies with respect to these churches is to *us*, as it was to *them*, an earnest of that more glorious fulfilment of the sacred oracles of God, which foretell the downfall of those great corruptions, which still disfigure the purity of Christ's Church and obstruct its blessed influence in the world; but which, we have the assurance of prophecy itself, "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming⁸."

It is unnecessary, and it would be beside our purpose, to notice all the different opinions which

⁶ Chap. iii. 21.

⁷ 2 Thess. ii. 7.

⁸ 2 Thess. ii. 8.

have been maintained by different commentators, with respect to the object and tendency of these epistles to the seven churches. The opinion, which is maintained by all the most learned commentators; which was espoused by the ancient expositors; and has been adopted by their most eminent successors in later ages, by Grotius, Hammond, Daubuz, Bengel, Bishop Newton, &c. is,—that they are addressed to the Asiatic churches in particular; and through them to the universal Christian church in all times and places¹. But respect for the venerated names of Henry More and Vitringa², requires us to notice an opinion which has been taken up by these learned writers; who have imagined that they have discovered a deeper prophetic mystery in these addresses, viz. that in them is foreshewn and delineated the future state of the Church, from the time of the Apostles to the end of the world, divided into seven successive and similar periods. But, as Dean Woodhouse has justly observed, “if we attempt to apply, in regular order, the description of the seven particular churches to seven successive periods of the universal church, we shall encounter insuperable difficulties³.” There is no difficulty in the plain and obvious interpretation which has been affixed by the majority of commentators to these chapters of the Apocalypse. The *object* of them is very evident: and the *effect*, which must have been produced by them on these different churches, must have been very striking, when we consider, that, at this distance of time, we must be ignorant of many things,—for instance, the tribu-

¹ Dean Woodhouse, Annotations on chap. ii. 1.

² More. Works. Vitringa in Apoc. p. 48.

³ Woodhouse. Ib.

lation, which, it is foretold in chap. ii. 10, should happen to the Church of Smyrna, and the circumstances relating to the persecutions against the church of Pergamos (chap. ii. 13), in which the martyr Antipas was slain,—events of which we have no certain historical information in the present day, but which must have arrested in a very powerful manner the *immediate* attention of the Christians of that time; and not only have created an especial reverence for this prophecy at that early period, but also, in some of these churches, led to a reformation of life and doctrine, which, we know, endured to a very late period. The *object* of them also, considered with reference to Christian churches in *future* ages, is very evident;—to warn them of the great danger of unfaithfulness in the sacred trust which is committed to their charge; and that, if *they* fail in their duty, as the great lights in the Christian world, they must be prepared to expect the same judgment which was inflicted on these churches, that “their candlestick will be removed out of its place⁴.”

PART II.

COMPREHENDING, UNDER THE SIX FIRST SEALS, A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TO THE GREAT CONSUMMATION OF ALL THINGS.

SECT. I.

Representation of the Divine Glory in Heaven.

HAVING considered the Epistles, which were addressed by the great Head of the Church to the seven Churches of Asia, we next proceed to that portion of the Apocalypse which contains a pro-

⁴ Chap. ii. 5.

phetical view of the fates and fortunes of the Christian Church to the great consummation of all things. The first part of this vision relates to the appearance, which was vouchsafed to St John, of the Divine glory in heaven.

CHAP. IV.

- 1 "AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither,
- 2 and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was
- 3 set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an
- 4 emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns
- 5 of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.
- 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne,
- 7 were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast
- 8 was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy,
- 9 Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him
- 10 that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and
- 11 cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

1. It is remarked by Vitranga, that there is a resemblance between the vision which was here vouchsafed to St John, and those which were vouchsafed to former Prophets, to Moses, to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to Daniel'. "But," as Dean Woodhouse ob-

¹ Exod. xxiv. 9, 10; Isai. vi. 1, 2; Ezek. i. 1—26; Dan. vii. 9. Vitranga, p. 170.

serves, "it is only a *general* resemblance;" and it is accompanied by circumstances, which essentially distinguish it from all similar revelations which were made to former Prophets. It is evident that this is a vision of the Father, the first Person of the ever-blessed Trinity; because he is especially distinguished in this chapter (ver. 5.) from the seven Spirits before the throne, and from the Son, in another part of the vision (chap. v. 13.). But though, as has been observed, it presents a general resemblance to other manifestations of the Divine Majesty under the old dispensation, there is one part of it which more particularly connects it with that of Ezekiel; namely, the appearance of the rainbow round about the throne; the emblem of mercy and peace under a former covenant, though symbolical of that greater mercy of redemption, of which, in the Apocalypse, it is the earnest and the pledge to man².

2. The next object in this vision, and one which essentially distinguishes it from all similar revelations under the former dispensation, is that of the twenty-four elders, who are represented as surrounding the throne, clothed in white raiment, and having on their heads crowns of gold. Concerning the peculiar character of these celestial personages, who are admitted to such distinguished honour near the throne of the Most High, there is great difference of opinion amongst the commentators on the Apocalypse. It is their office, as appears throughout this divine book, to surround the throne and sing praises to the great Creator. They perform the same office in heaven which is allotted to the priesthood on earth, and they are twenty-four in number, like

² See Vitringa ad locum.

the courses of the priests under the Law. "But it is also evident," as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "that they are not *angels*, the usual attendants of the Deity; they have no other attribute or character of those heavenly inhabitants than that of heavenly ministration. These are not then 'the innumerable company of angels,' described by the Apostle to the Hebrews (chap. xii.) No; this 'innumerable company of angels' is added to the scenery in the next chapter¹; nor can we with greater probability suppose them to represent that which immediately follows in the same description, 'the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven;' because, by comparing this part of the vision with that which follows in chap. xiv. 1, we shall plainly discover that the twenty-four elders, though they may represent *a part of Christ's Church, redeemed from the earth*, do not represent *the general assembly, or whole body*. For the Lamb, the Redeemer, when he appears on Mount Sion, is attended by an hundred and forty and four thousand; who are expressly said to be *the redeemed from amongst men*². And these are distinct from the Elders: for they sing a new song before the throne, and before the living creatures, *and before the Elders*."

"We must, therefore," as this learned writer has observed, "look for another body with whose description the twenty-four elders may agree. Such another body, he observes, is disclosed in the very same passage of the Apostle to the Hebrews; for, in his description of the inhabitants of heaven, having mentioned, 1st, this general assembly of Christ's Church; 2dly, 'God the Judge of all,' he adds, 3dly, 'the spirits

¹ See ver. 11.

² Chap. xiv. 4.

of just men made perfect:’ which is indeed a very general expression, and, as such, if occurring in any other place, *might* be understood to comprehend the *whole* of the Christian Church perfected in heaven. But as in this passage of the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is an evident distinction between ‘the spirits of just men made perfect,’ and ‘the general assembly of the church;’ and as the same distinction is to be observed in this passage of the Apocalypse, between the company of ‘the redeemed from among men,’ and ‘the twenty-four elders;’ so we seem authorized to look for another explanation; for one which may bring together the two remaining unexplained descriptions, those of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of the Apocalypse³.” Why should not we suppose them to be some amongst the most distinguished saints and servants of the Most High, who, having been eminent in their generations as preachers of righteousness and examples of holiness, are admitted to some more distinguished station of glory in the immediate presence of God?

Allusion to such persons is made in other parts of Scripture, and to the circumstance of some pre-eminent station being assigned to them in heaven, beyond the rest of the blessed. For instance, by Isaiah xxiv. 23; where the Lord is described as “reigning in Mount Sion, and in Jerusalem, and *before his ancients* (or *elders*, πρεσβύτεροι, LXX.) *gloriously*”⁴. Our Saviour promised to the Apostles, that “when the Son of man should come in his glory, they also should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel⁵.” “Do ye not know,” says

³ Woodhouse ad locum.

⁴ See W. Lowth ad locum.

⁵ Matt. xix. 28.

St Paul, "that the saints shall judge the world?" and that "we shall judge angels?" Stations of pre-eminent distinction and glory in heaven appear also to be assigned to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob². Indeed, if Moses and Elijah were admitted to the distinguished honour of sharing with the Redeemer the glories of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, in which mysterious and interesting scene the subject of his *death* formed a distinguished part³; is there any inconsistency in supposing, that *they* and other distinguished saints and servants of God under the old dispensation, such as Enoch⁴, and Job⁵, and others,—who by faith saw the day of the Redeemer afar off, and who "saw it and were glad⁶,"—may be admitted to a more distinguished place amongst the glories of heaven,—to a nearer station round the throne of the Most High?

Such an idea is surely agreeable to the general doctrine of Scripture on this most interesting subject; and so also is the consolatory conclusion which we derive from it, that "in the future heavenly life, human beings of tried and superior faith and virtue shall be admitted to a near approach to the glory and happiness of the heavenly throne." Indeed, the crowns, which they are described as having on their heads, appear to number them with that distinguished band of the chosen saints and servants of the Redeemer, to whom such a reward is more especially assigned; which the Apostles and first martyrs kept constantly in view, as the reward of their labours and the end of all their trials;—"the crown of glory

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

² Matt. viii. 11; Luke xvi. 22, &c.

³ Luke ix. 31.

⁴ Jude 14, 15.

⁵ Job xix. 23—27. See Bp Pearson

son *On the Creed* on this passage.

⁶ John viii. 56.

which fadeth not away," to which St Peter looked with joyful anticipation at the appearing of the chief Shepherd⁷; "the crown of righteousness," which St Paul knew was "laid up for him" in heaven, and "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him at that day⁸." There however appears to be no reason to suppose them, as some commentators have done, to belong to the Old Testament, or, as others, to the New, exclusively. They may, as Mede has observed, belong to both; for all are saved by the same Christian efficacy; and the purer and more spiritual worship of the one is typified and prefigured in the more formal services of the other⁹. But they are also said to have been clothed in white raiment; white, as having been purified by the blood of the Redeemer¹⁰, whom they acknowledge in their songs of praise to have "redeemed them to God by his blood."

3. Moreover it is said, that "out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices." Such was the appearance of the Almighty on mount Sinai¹¹; and under similar images of glory and majesty is he described in other parts of prophetic Scripture¹².

4. There were also represented in the vision "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,

⁷ 1 Pet. v. 4.

⁸ 2 Tim. ii. 8.

⁹ Woodhouse, Annotations ad locum.

¹⁰ "Tribuuntur illis *stolæ albæ*, et, quæ vis est hujus vocis, *splendentes*. *Albæ* quidem, tum quod ipsi *abluti*, *sanctificati et justificati essent sanguine Jesu Christi*, ac in ipsius nomine, et per Spiritum Dei nostri; tum

quod ejusdem doctrinæ veræ de justificatione peccatorum præcones et administrari essent: *splendentes* vero, quod ad dignitatem regiminis Ecclesiæ evecti venerint in partem et communionem majestatis et gloriæ Jesu Christi." Vitringa in locum.

¹¹ Exod. xxiv. 16.

¹² Psal. xviii. xcvii. Hab. iii.

which are the seven Spirits of God." In this part of the imagery of the heavenly vision, allusion is made to the seven lights of the golden candlestick, which was placed before the veil on the south side of the tabernacle¹; and which, if the veil had been removed, would have thrown their light upon the Holy of Holies, and upon the cherubim which were above the mercy seat. But there is no mention made of the *veil*, in the vision of the heavenly temple which was exhibited to St John; because it had been removed by the virtue of the obedience and death of Christ².

5. The next object in the heavenly vision, is "the sea of glass like unto chrystal;" under which image is represented its purity and resplendent clearness. "All the ancient commentators," observes Dean Woodhouse, "down to Primasius, have supposed this glassy sea to have its prototype under the Old Testament, in the great laver, full of water, standing in Solomon's temple, called the brazen sea, used for the purification of the Priests, (1 Kings vii.; 2 Chron. iv.; Joseph. viii. iii. 6—8); and that this sea, thus represented to us under the New Testament, is intended to express that instrument of purification which it introduces, "the water of holy baptism," or more properly that which the baptismal water represents, "*the blood of the Redeemer*;" which alone possesses the cleansing efficacy of taking away sin³." That this is the true interpretation of this part of the vision, appears to be established by a comparison of this passage with the parallel

¹ Exod. xxv. 41; xl. 24.

³ Woodhouse. Annotations ad lo-

² Heb. x. 19, 20. See Vitringa ad locum.

passage in chap. xv. 2; in which the martyrs, who are introduced as triumphant on this *glassy sea*, are represented as obtaining their conquest "by the blood of the Lamb;" in which they are represented to have "washed and made white their robes". "The purification of the Priests for the service of the earthly temple was in the brazen sea; those who minister before the God of heaven, are purified by the heavenly sea; by the blood of the Redeemer⁵."

6. The next objects, which are represented in the scenery of this vision, are "the four living creatures:" "and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. And the *first* beast was like a lion, and the *second* beast like a calf, and the *third* beast had a face as a man, and the *fourth* beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within." Now the word, which is here rendered by our Translators *beasts*, ought rather, as is done by Dean Woodhouse and others, to be rendered *living creatures*. The original in St John is ζῶα; and, in the corresponding passages in Ezekiel, חַיִּיּוֹת⁶; in which passages it is rendered uniformly by our Translators *living creatures*. Commentators have differed very widely in their opinions

⁵ Chap. xii. 11; vii. 14. See also chap. i. 5. The learned and excellent Vitringa objects to this interpretation of the passage: and supposes that under the name "as it were of a glassy sea, like unto chrystal," is described the rich transparent pavement, supporting the celestial throne and its surrounding ministers, as described by Ezekiel

chap. i. 22; and by Moses, Exod. xxiv. 10. Vitring. ad locum. But compare what is said by Dean Woodhouse in his *Annotations* ad locum, pp. 108, 109; where he has examined the opinion of Vitringa with equal candour and judgment.

⁶ Woodhouse on chap. xv. 2.

⁷ Ezek. i. 5.

with regard to the peculiar character, which belongs to these heavenly beings. But the same description of vision was vouchsafed to Ezekiel and to Isaiah: we will endeavour, therefore, by a comparison of the vision of St John with those which were vouchsafed to these Prophets, to ascertain the peculiar character which they sustain in the vision of St John.

1. With regard to the vision which was seen by Ezekiel, it is described by him in the first and tenth chapters of his prophecy: "And I looked," he says, "and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man;"—by which is meant, their shape was erect like the form of a man. "And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet: the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went: and they turned not, when they went." (ver. 4—12.) Moreover they ap-

peared to support a moveable throne; and in the midst of the firmament which was above the throne, and above the heads of the living creatures, appeared the vision of the divine glory, to which we have before referred, surrounded by the rainbow. That these beings were of surpassing glory, is evident from the sublime description which is given of their motions: "And when they went," observes the prophet, "I heard the voice of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of a host¹." This account of the vision is repeated by the Prophet, with some variation, in the tenth chapter; where he expressly says, that they were the Cherubim².

In these visions, there are some striking points of *resemblance*. The living creatures are represented, in both instances, as being "in the midst of the glory" which surrounded the throne; and they are, in both instances, represented as being "full of eyes;" by which is denoted universal intelligence. They *differ* in these respects: (1) that the *united* appearance of *all* the living creatures who are seen in the vision of St John, belongs to *each* of those who are seen in the vision of Ezekiel; (2) that in the vision of Ezekiel, the throne and the living creatures are moveable, whilst, in that of St John they are stationary; (3) in the vision of St John, the living creatures are about and in the presence of the throne, whilst in that of Ezekiel, they are below both the throne and the firmament, in which the divine glory appeared. (4) In the vision of Ezekiel, the Cherubim are represented as having *four* wings; in that of St John, they have *six* wings

¹ Chap. i. 24.

² Chap. x. 20.

each. But still, notwithstanding these points of *difference*, there is a *general resemblance* between them all; the consideration of which throws a great light on the whole of this mysterious scene.

2. Secondly, if we examine the description of the vision which was seen by Isaiah, we shall find some close points of resemblance between that and the vision which was here vouchsafed to St John. In the vision which was seen by Isaiah, and in which, after the similitude of the Cherubim which overshadowed the ark in the Holy of Holies, only two Cherubim appear,—he says, that “he saw the appearance of the Lord sitting on his throne, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory¹.” In the same manner, in the vision of St John, “the *four* living creatures are represented as having each *six* wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” In the vision of St John, it was, we know, the vision of the Almighty Father which appeared²; in that of Isaiah, it was the vision of the Redeemer, whose glory the prophet saw³: yet, in *both* visions, we hear the same hymn of praise, Holy, holy, holy; which has always been believed by the Christian church to have reference to the three-fold union in the Godhead. And with regard to the difference which is observed between

¹ Isai. vi. 1—3.

² See p. 91.

³ John xii. 41.

the vision of Ezekiel and those of Isaiah and St John,—that, in the *former* vision, the Cherubim are represented with *four*, and in the *latter*, with *six* wings; the propriety of this distinction has been remarked by the commentators: because, in the vision of Ezekiel, they are represented as being *under* the throne, whereas, in those of Isaiah and St John, they were *before* the throne, and more immediately in the presence of God; and therefore each of them had two wings to cover his face before such transcendent brightness⁴.

It appears clear, therefore, that, in all these different visions, the beings represented under these different appearances are those heavenly intelligences, who are the constant attendants of the divine Majesty, and surround the throne of God. With respect, therefore, to the particular nature and character of these beings, it is most becoming the reverence with which such subjects ought to be treated, that we should not seek to be “wise above what is written,” where humility is our highest wisdom; and where further knowledge is necessarily concealed from our view. Under these circumstances, therefore, we will abstain from a more elaborate consideration of those further mysteries, which many excellent writers have supposed to be concealed under these representations⁵. It will be sufficient to allude to the uniformity, which is to be observed in all these divine representations; and to the remark, which has been made by Mede, that “the scene

⁴ See Vitringa ad locum, p. 185, and Grotius, quoted by Dean Woodhouse. Compare also the commentary of Mr W. Lowth on these passages of Isaiah and Ezekiel.

⁵ See some of these opinions examined by Dean Woodhouse in his larger Work, and also in his Annotations ad locum.

of the Apocalypse, and of this august session of God and his Church, ὁ θρόνος τῆς καθέδρας, is the inner and most holy part of the temple;—or, to speak more properly, it is that theatre in heaven, which was represented upon earth by *the inner temple*; where God was supposed to have his seat between, or among, the Cherubim. Hence, as we advance, we shall find the furniture of the temple, the golden altar of incense before the throne, the ark of the covenant, the sea or laver &c. These were originally appointed to be made *after the heavenly pattern* shewn to Moses in the mount¹. There is however one remark, which must occur to us on considering these different representations of the appearance of the divine Majesty,—that there is an uniformity, and yet a *difference*, to be observed in them, which proves incontestably the inspiration of those prophets, by whom they are recorded: and with regard to this last vision of St John, the *peculiarities* which belong to it, as distinguished from those which were vouchsafed to the former prophets, are eminently suited to the place which it occupies in the divine dispensations, and are such as *reality* alone could have enabled him to describe.

The occupation, therefore, which constitutes the employment of these glorious beings, is in perfect conformity with the character which is here assigned to them. They are represented as singing the eternal praises of their great Creator. “They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Nor is the character, which is sustained in this glorious vision by the twenty-four elders, (those glorious

¹ Hebr. viii. 5. See Dean Woodhouse, p. 112. Mede's Works, pp. 543, 544.

beings, who, having served God faithfully upon earth, are now admitted to the privilege of serving him eternally in his heavenly temple,) less becoming the humble adoration with which they view their great Creator; when they are represented as falling down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever; while they "cast their crowns before the throne", saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

But the vision is not yet complete. The Lamb next appears in the midst of the throne, accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, who, upon his taking the sealed book out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne, sing the new song before the throne.

PART II. SECT. II.

The Lamb appears in the midst of the Throne.

CHAP. V.

"AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne 1 a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud 2 voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under 3 the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to 4 open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And 5 one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion

² Vitringa gives the following excellent illustration of this passage: "Non ait Presbyteros *τεθεικέναι*, *posuisse* diademata, sed *βεβληκέναι*: quod argumento est, grave sibi veluti et molestum fuisse, Deo præsente, coronas suas gestare. Tam in iis vividus erat

suæ indignitatis et tenuitatis sensus; tam profunda in Divinam majestatem reverentia." Comment. ad locum, p. 193. He has also given some valuable illustrations of this expression from profane writers. Ib. p. 192.

of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to
 6 open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I
 beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four
 beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it
 had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which
 are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.
 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of
 8 him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the
 book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down
 before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden
 9 vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And
 they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take
 the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain,
 and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kin-
 10 dred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us
 unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the
 11 earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels
 round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and
 the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand,
 12 and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy
 is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and
 wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth,
 and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that
 are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory,
 and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and
 14 unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said,
 Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and wor-
 shipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

There is a remarkable uniformity, in the expo-
 sition of this chapter, to be found in all the best
 commentators on the Apocalypse. The book, which
 is here represented as being seen in the right hand¹
 of him that sat on the throne, was one of those rolls
 which were in use amongst the ancients; and which
 are spoken of in other parts of Scripture². It is
 described as being "sealed." Such were the pro-
 phecies which were delivered to Daniel concerning
 Christ's kingdom; which were then dark and only to

¹ See in Vitringa p. 197, a vindica-
 tion of this translation against Beza,
 Grotius, and others, who would trans-
 late the expression of the original, ἐν
 τῇ δεξιᾷ, "on the right hand." Its

correctness is indeed evident from what
 follows, where the Lamb is described
 as "taking the book out of the right
 hand of him who sat on the throne."

² Psal. xl. 7. Ezek. ii. 9.

be unfolded by additional prophecy; and are therefore said to be “sealed and closed up till the time of the end³:” and, in like manner, in chap. x. 4 of this book, the prophet is commanded not to write certain predictions which were uttered, but to *seal them up*; which evidently means, that they were not to be disclosed at that time⁴. It is, moreover, described as being like the roll which was given to Ezekiel, “written within and without⁵,” signifying the abundance of the matter which it contained: and by the *number* of the seals, *seven*, was probably intended to be signified the *seven* great periods of the Christian church, which constitute the main subject of the prophecy⁶.

There is an awful solemnity in the whole of this description. How greatly is the sublime interest of this wonderful scene increased by the manner in which the different incidents are brought together,—the proclamation of the angel,—the grief of the prophet because no Being, either in heaven or in earth, was found worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof,—and the declaration of the Elder—that One had been found who had prevailed to open the book and to loose the seals thereof;—even the great Redeemer himself,—He who, under the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, was spoken of by the dying Patriarch⁷,—who was foretold by Isaiah as “the Branch” and “the Root of Jesse⁸,” and is

³ Dan. xii. 9.

⁴ Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

⁵ Ezek. ii. 10. See W. Lowth ad locum.

⁶ “*Sigilla septem*, quæ in hoc volumine comparent, referenda erunt ad *septem* majores rerum eventus, sive mu-

tationes, quas Ecclesia usque ad rerum omnium finem subiret: *septem* inquam, *dies majores*, sive *intervalla Ecclesiae Christi*. Vitrunga Ib. p. 200.

⁷ Gen. xlix. 9.

⁸ Isai. xi. 1—10.

described by his Apostle in this book as being "the root and the offspring¹," as he had been declared by himself to be "the Son and the Lord of David²;"—who was indeed "made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead³;"—and who, having purchased our pardon by his death, hath "all power given him in heaven and in earth⁴," angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto him⁵. And then what can be more affecting than the description which follows; when the Redeemer himself, appearing in the midst of the throne, under the symbol of a Lamb, the emblem of his suffering state,—the symbol under which he was prefigured in types, and foretold in prophecy, and lastly pointed out by the Baptist himself⁶;—and yet with "seven horns and seven eyes," the emblems of universal knowledge and almighty power⁷,—takes the book out of the hands of Him who sat on the throne: while the innumerable multitudes of the redeemed, with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, fall down before the Lamb, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever⁸, "saying with a loud

¹ Chap. xxii. 16.

² Matt. xxii. 41—45.

³ Rom. i. 3, 4.

⁴ Matt. xxviii. 18.

⁵ 1 Pet. iii. 22.

⁶ John i. 29.

⁷ Luke i. 69; Zech. iii. 9. iv. 10.

As the seven horns of the Lamb signify our Lord's omnipotence, so do the seven eyes his omnipresence. These seven eyes are described in Zech. iii. 9. iv. 10. to be "the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth." They are in that passage said to be inscribed on "a stone," which is

probably "the precious stone, the head stone of the corner," described in Isai. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; Luke xx. 17; Acts iv. 11. and therefore, being applied to Christ, appear to have reference to this description. Dean Woodhouse.

⁸ For an illustration of the expressions in ver. 8, see Woodhouse and Vitringa, p. 214. "They are said to sing 'a new song'". For the peculiar force and meaning of this expression see Woodhouse on ver. 9; and compare Psalm xxxiii. 1. xcvi. 1. xcvi. 1.

voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

It is impossible that any thing can bring before the mind, in a more affecting manner, the majesty and the humility of our great Redeemer, or fill us with more exalted ideas of that infinite condescension and love, in which, for us men and for our salvation, he humbled himself to the death of the cross;—and of that glory to which he is exalted at the right hand of God, where he "hath a name given him, which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father⁹." And as it is calculated to give us a just idea of the *character* of the events, which are the subject of this Prophecy, so is it also of the dignity and the importance of the Revelation which is contained in it.

PART II. SECT. III.

The Seals.

CHAPS. VI. VII.

"AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and 1 I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: 2 and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. And 3 when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that 4

⁹ Phil. ii. 9—11.

was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and
 5 there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat
 6 on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and
 7 see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast
 8 say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth
 9 part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. And when he
 10 had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice,
 11 saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was
 12 said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should
 13 be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair,
 14 and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs,
 15 when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings
 16 of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks
 17 of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

1 "AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea,
 2 nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt
 3 the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in
 4 their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four
 5 thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben

were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The view which has been taken of the preceding part of this prophecy, and of the Person who is the great Agent in it, and particularly in the vision which is the subject of our present consideration, will naturally lead us to expect, that the subjects contained in this sealed book should be connected with that religion; of which the Redeemer,—having laid the foundation, when he rose again from the dead and ascended up to heaven to the right hand of God—again appears in this Prophecy as the great protector and friend; fulfilling the promise which he made to his Apostles, when he sent them forth to

preach the gospel to every creature,—“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

It is due, however, to the fair and impartial consideration of this portion of this important Prophecy, to state,—that there are some commentators, of great eminence, who have applied the prophecies of the sealed book to *other* subjects, which are not immediately connected with the history and fortunes of the Christian religion: and as the question of the *principle*, on which we explain the prophecies contained in the Seals, is of great importance, considered not merely with reference to the true interpretation of the prophecies which are contained in the *Seals*, but of those also which are contained in the *Trumpets* and the *Vials*; we will consider briefly the peculiar character of the opinions of these writers; and the grounds, on which the application of their peculiar views of prophetic interpretation to the prophecies before us, appears to rest.

1. The first is the opinion, which has been adopted from Grotius, with some modifications, by Hammond and Lightfoot, that the *Seals* describe the judgments which were inflicted on the Jewish state and people, till their final subversion by the Romans¹.

2. The *second* is that which has been adopted by Mede, Bishop Newton, and others; that the Seals describe the history of the Roman Empire, and the external history of the Church, till the public recognition of Christianity by Constantine².

3. *Another* is that which has been adopted by

¹ See Hammond in locum, and Lightfoot, *Harmony of the New Testament*, Works, Vol. 1. p. 342.

² See Vitranga, pp. 230, 231, and Woodhouse's *Annotations on the Seals*.

Faber, and which is borrowed from a similar interpretation of the vision which is contained in the sixth chapter of the prophet Zechariah,—that they have reference to the four great empires, which are mentioned in the book of Daniel.

4. The *last* is that which is adopted by Vitringa, —that the Seals contain a brief sketch and prophetical history of the Christian Church, and of the great events of the world, as far as they are connected with it, to the end of all things; and that the Trumpets, under different symbols, recount the history of the same period, though dwelling principally on a different class of events relating to the history of the Church. This is the opinion, which Dean Woodhouse states was adopted by himself before he became acquainted with the opinions of Vitringa³. But, as may be expected, these writers, though they agree in the *general principles* of interpretation which are adopted by them, *differ* in some minor particulars⁴.

It will be important, with a view to the settlement of this important question, to make some brief remarks on these different opinions:

(1) And, in the *first* place, with regard to the *first* opinion which has been mentioned, and which refers the prophecies contained in the Seals to the destruction of the Jewish state and people;—though it derives some support from a comparison of the symbols, which are employed under the sixth seal, with those which are employed by our Saviour himself in his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem;

³ See Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 163—166.

⁴ The most important of these opi-

nions are stated and examined by Vitringa in his *Preface to the Seals*, pp. 224—241.

yet it is fatal to this opinion, if we believe the Apocalypse to have been written towards the close of the reign of Domitian, which was twenty-five years *later* than the destruction of Jerusalem¹.

(2) With regard to the *second* opinion, that of Mede and his followers; it appears from an examination of the character of the prophecies of the Old Testament, that the affairs of *temporal* kingdoms are no farther introduced in them, than as they are connected with their influence on religion; and, therefore, it is improbable that it should be the case in a prophecy, the great subject of which is the history and destinies of the Christian Church. Now, in the greater part of those events relating to the history of the Roman Empire, which are supposed by Mede and his followers to constitute the subject of these Seals; we can discover no necessary connection with the history and progress of the Christian religion, at the period when these events happened. The events themselves are of such a character, that it is impossible to say in what particular respects Christians would be interested in the knowledge of them, or how such knowledge could tend to the edification of the Church. Moreover, most of the important events connected with the Roman Empire were of too *general* a character to be specially pointed out in prophecy. With some exceptions, wars and cruelty were the general characteristics of the sovereigns who swayed the destinies of the Roman Empire, till the accession of Constantine².

(3) With regard to the *third* opinion, which has been mentioned, it is exposed to the same objections with the two former, that it would refer the

¹ Vitrings, p. 227.

² Ib. pp. 231—234.

prophecies contained in the Seals to events which had long gone by, and which have no necessary connection with the history of the Christian religion, which is the great subject of the Apocalypse. Another objection is, that this exposition of the Seals is founded on a similar view of the vision contained in the *sixth* chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah,—an exposition, however, which is not generally received; nor indeed can it be admitted to harmonize with the general tenor of that prophecy.

To these remarks relating to these different opinions, we may add,—without anticipating what may be more properly the subject of future consideration,—that the symbols which are employed, and the language in which the different events are foretold, appear to be of too awful and spiritual a character to be legitimately applied to the events, which are supposed to be contained in them³.

(4) The difficulties, which attend all these different hypotheses,—difficulties which are insuperable, considered with reference to the peculiar character of this prophecy, as having reference to the fates and fortunes of the Christian Church,—make it a circumstance of so much greater importance, that we should consider more attentively the opinion which has been last mentioned, and which is espoused by Dean Woodhouse and Vitringa,—that the Seals contain a brief sketch and prophetic history of the Christian Church, and of the events of the world, as far as they are connected with it, to the end of all things.

It is evident, on comparing the language and symbols which are employed in the Seals, with those which are employed in the visions of Zechariah,

³ Vitringa, p. 234.

which are contained in the *first* and the *sixth* chapters of his prophecy, that there is a great resemblance between them: and, therefore, it is evident that we may derive great assistance in the interpretation of the *later* prophecy, from considering the sense in which the *symbols* are employed in that which is more ancient: and whatever is the object of these symbols in the *former* prophecies, we may conclude that they ought to be understood with a similar application of them in the *later*.

I. We will, therefore, in the first place, consider the true character and interpretation which belongs to these visions of Zechariah.

1. The *first* vision of the prophet Zechariah, which appears connected with this vision in the Apocalypse, is that which is contained in the first chapter of his prophecy, and which is thus described by the prophet: "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees which were in the bottom: and behind him there were red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me, said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest¹."

"These horses," as Dean Woodhouse has remarked, "appear, in the sequel, to represent the progress of heavenly angels in military array, sent

¹ Zech. i. 8—11.

forth through the nations at the time of the Jewish captivity. The red horses, which lead the array, portend war and slaughter, such as had preceded the captivity. The white horses, concluding the procession, denote, as the context shews (ver. 11.), the peace and happiness which were to follow. The speckled or party-coloured horses were to express the intermediate transition². Such appears to be the evident purport of the vision³.

2. In the sixth chapter of the same prophecy, there is a similar exhibition of four chariots drawn by red, by black, and by party-coloured horses, which are explained to be "the four spirits of heaven which go forth from the Lord." And they go forth for the same purpose; "the black horses denoting mourning and woe, go forth to the north country," to Babylon, where the Jews were then in bondage: but "the white go forth after them;" the deliverance of the Jews, the restoration of their temple and religion followed under the victorious Cyrus⁴. The main object and purport of these visions is therefore very evident,—to assure the Jewish people of the final restoration of their kingdom and their religion; and effectually excludes the idea of four kingdoms being intended to be represented by the four chariots,—an idea which has been adopted by some commentators, and which has, on these grounds, been applied by them to the interpretation of this vision in the Apocalypse.

3. But there is another important point, in which it is right to institute a comparison between these

² Woodhouse, p. 129.

³ See W. Lowth and Bishop Hall's Paraphrase on the passage.

⁴ Woodhouse, *Ib.*

visions of Zechariah and the Apocalypse,—namely, with reference to the Person who appears as the great Agent in the scene.

In the vision which is contained in the first chapter of Zechariah, “a man” is described as “riding on a red horse, followed by red horses, speckled and white.” Both the angel, who was conversing with the prophet, as well as the other heavenly intelligences who followed him, are represented as addressing this angel as their superior: and he is expressly called in the *twelfth*, the *thirteenth*, and the *twentieth* verses of the same chapter, by the name JEHOVAH. There can be no doubt, therefore, with regard to the *character* of this angel,—that it is the same, who was manifested to the holy men of old with the titles and attributes of divinity, the LOGOS, the only-begotten Son of God. He is the same angel, who appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord’s host, and who demanded and received from him divine worship;—“Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy¹,” the same worship which was paid to him by Moses, when he appeared to him in the bush, and declared himself to be “the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob².” He appears both to Joshua and Zechariah, as he had done to Moses before, both in the bush and during the journeyings of the Israelites in the wilderness, as the almighty defender and protector of his people.

II. Let us, therefore, secondly, apply the considerations arising from these visions to the illustration of those which were vouchsafed to St John in the Apocalypse.

¹ Joshua v. 15.

² Exod. iii. 5. Compare the notes of Mr W. Lowth on Zech. i. 8—13.

1. The first vision was that of a Person riding upon a white horse: "And I saw," says St John, "and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer." The bow, which is here given to this rider, is an emblem of the warfare in which he was engaged; and, like the white horses in the vision of Zechariah,—which represented the character of those conquests which led to the deliverance of the Jews, and the restoration of their temple and religion under the victorious Cyrus,—so does it represent the character of the conquests which were to be achieved by him: and the crown is an emblem of victory.

Similar to this is the language of the forty-fifth Psalm, which we know from St Paul, is addressed directly to the Messiah: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, of meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things".² But if we want any additional confirmation of the character of this rider, we may derive it from a comparison of this passage with that in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, in which the same Divine Person is described. "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is

² Compare Hebr. i. 8, 9.

called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords."

There can be no doubt with respect to the Person to whom this description appertains,—that it is the WORD, the only-begotten Son of God. There is only this difference,—that he appears, in the last passage, as the glorious conqueror, to achieve his final triumph, and to inflict vengeance on his enemies; in the former, he appears merely in the *commencement* of that glorious cause which was to lead him on to victory: he appears going forth "conquering and to conquer." "The progress of the white horse," Dean Woodhouse observes, "seems to be that of the Christian religion, in its primitive purity, from the time that its heavenly Founder left it on earth, under the conduct of his Apostles¹."

2. The opening of the *second* Seal exhibits the appearance of "another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." Vitringa explains this Seal of the persecutions, with which Christianity was assailed by the power of Imperial Rome, particularly those which it experienced in the Diocletian persecution². But, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, the prophecy which is contained

¹ Woodhouse, p. 131.

² Vitringa, pp. 251—255.

in it, appears to have been more truly and completely fulfilled in the mutual quarrels and animosities, and the persecutions and bloodshed, which often followed from these animosities; and which brought so much discredit on the religion of Christ³. "Think not," said our Redeemer himself, "that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword⁴." And what tumults arose out of the different struggles in the Church for pre-eminence and power! What bitter animosities were engendered by the fierce quarrels of contending sects! Such was the schism of the Donatists, in which thousands of Christians perished by the hands of each other; and such also is the history of the Arian controversy, the details of which reflect disgrace on the Christian name.

3. The effects and consequences of these corruptions of Christian doctrine, and of the mutual dissensions of Christians with each other, are described under the third Seal; in which,—under the symbol of a black horse, bearing a rider with a pair of balances in his hand, and the voice crying, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine,"—is described the mournful consequences of these disputes, and the deplorable scarcity of Christian truth which followed. Similar to this is the meaning which is implied under the symbol of the black horses in the vision of Zechariah, which are an emblem of the mournful condition of the Jews during their captivity: and with regard to the scarcity which is here foretold, as Vitringa and Dean Woodhouse have remarked⁵, it is not to be understood in

³ *Annotations*, p. 130, note.

⁴ Matt. x. 34.

⁵ "Recte monuit Medus, emblemata hoc esse *judicii publici*, de annona *stuentis*."

a *literal* sense, but of a scarcity of another kind, even that of which the prophet Amos speaks: "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing of the words of the Lord¹." In the history of the different famines, which happened at the period to which this portion of the Apocalypse may be justly supposed to relate, we look in vain for any which appear to fulfil the terms of this prophecy: and such an application of them is unworthy of the solemnity with which this vision is introduced. But the truth of the prophecy contained in this vision was abundantly verified in the mournful destitution of Christian truth, which followed these disputes in the Christian Church: while at the same time the declaration from the throne, "*See thou hurt not the oil and the wine,*" has been remarkably fulfilled in the preservation of Christian truth amidst the most painful circumstances of discouragement and despair².

4. Under the fourth Seal, there is exhibited to us "a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with beasts of the earth." Under the symbol of Death, in this Seal, is represented that *spiritual* death which is the universal consequence of the banishment of Christian truth. Vitringa, who understands this Seal, as he does the three preceding Seals, to describe *the history of the Christian Church*, explains

tuentis. Sed quam frigide ille de cura annonæ temporariæ, quam hi Imperatores susceperunt, simul instituit exponere. Sane si majora et graviora his sigillis non contineantur, quam inter alia Imperatores quosdam Romanos annonam temporariam rite curaturos

esse: eritne quod tanti hanc Revelationem faciat Ecclesia?" Vitringa, p. 281.

¹ Amos viii. 11.

² See Vitringa and Woodhouse ad locum.

it of the *deadly* influence on Christian truth, and the cruel persecutions against the professors of the Christian doctrines, which were produced by the conquests and the tyranny of Mahomet and his followers³. Dean Woodhouse, with great propriety, extends it also to the religious darkness and the cruel persecutions which followed the establishment of the Papal power. The effect of these great apostacies have been deeply felt over a great portion of the Christian world, not merely in the moral and religious darkness with which they overspread it, but in the cruel massacres and persecutions which accompanied and followed the establishment of their power⁴.

Such is the history of the Christian Church which is exhibited under these Seals; and so completely has the truth of prophecy been established by the event! But the ministers, who appear to follow the triumphant conqueror on the white horse, as they differ from him in the beneficent effects which followed from *his* conquests, so do they also in *power*. *He* "went forth conquering and to conquer." Of the minister of discord who follows him on the red horse, it is merely said, that "*power* was given to him," or "*it was given to him* (*ἐδόθη αὐτῷ*), to take peace from the earth;"—according to the declaration of our Saviour to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above;" and the general doctrine of Scripture,—that the ministers of mischief, whether they be evil spirits, or wicked men, act only by *permission* of Him, who is able to control and to destroy their power. But the comparison of this vision in the Apocalypse with

³ Vitringa, p. 267.

Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 142—

⁴ See the valuable note of Dean 144.

those under the old dispensation,—as it throws an interesting light over the whole subject, so also does it illustrate the general doctrine of Scripture, both with respect to spiritual influence in general, and also with respect to Him, who is the great Agent of the Almighty Father in both dispensations.

(1) In the first place, these visions both of Zechariah and of the Apocalypse, represent to us the ministration of angels in subordination to Christ their Head; and exhibit them as engaged in their various occupations, as the messengers of mercy or of judgment; and as employed in furthering the designs of the Almighty Father in the general administration of the world, with an especial view to the affairs of his Church, and the progress and prospects of his religion. The doctrine, which we derive from this connected view of Scripture, is of the greatest interest and importance; whether we consider the angels as the ministers of the Almighty in the general government of the Church, or as engaged in the discharge of that duty, the belief of which is so full of consolation and confidence to the true Christian,—when we regard them as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation¹.”

(2) Secondly, in comparing this vision of the Redeemer in the Apocalypse with those which were vouchsafed to Zechariah and Joshua, we behold that same Divine Person, who was manifested to the Patriarchs of old as “the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,”—“the Angel who was with the Church in the wilderness²,”—the Captain of the host of the Lord, who appeared to Joshua, when he had brought him into the promised land,—and who appeared to

¹ Hebr. i. 14.

² Acts vii. 38.

Zechariah to comfort him respecting his afflicted Church and people,—again appearing to his chosen Apostle and Prophet St John, to assure him, amidst many revelations of a more gloomy character, of the future glories and the final triumphs of his religion! So wonderful is the harmony of the divine dispensations; and so valuable is the light, which we derive, in the knowledge of *later* dispensations, from considering the character of those which have gone before!

5. The *fifth* Seal represents the souls of those, who had been slain in the different persecutions by the enemies of the truth, as crying out from under the altar for vengeance on their persecutors. With regard to the altar which is here mentioned, we are not informed whether it is the golden altar of incense, which had its place in the Holy of Holies, or the brazen altar of burnt sacrifice. “The former,” as Dean Woodhouse observes, “is more appropriate to the scenery; but the latter seems more fitting to the action represented, in which the martyrs are *sacrificed*. For at the golden altar were offered only incense and prayer; before the brazen altar the victims were slain.” But as the same learned writer and Vitringa have observed³, the difficulty may be removed, by considering that the whole of the temple and its courts appear to have been represented in vision to the Prophet; “and then, though the golden altar may be still supposed to stand in its place, in the scenery before the throne, yet the brazen altar may also appear upon the roll of the book, when opened by the Lamb.” And with regard to the imprecation of vengeance, which the souls of the martyrs are represented as uttering

³ Vitringa, p. 271. Woodhouse, p. 165. Comp. Exod. xxvii. 1—3; xxx. 1—3.

against their persecutors, it is to be understood in the same sense in which the blood of Abel is said to have cried out for vengeance from heaven¹. But, as has been remarked, the whole scene is prophetic². For at the time when this prophecy was uttered, there had been few martyrs to the Christian cause. But we are here taught, that there would be, in successive ages, a long train of suffering witnesses to the truth, who would be received into their rest, to wait for the great day of recompense, when "the noble army of martyrs" will be finally completed and avenged. This is in perfect agreement with the doctrine of the other parts of Scripture, and particularly with that of St Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; where, in speaking of the saints and martyrs of old, he expressly says of them, that "they all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise," by which he means, the completion of the promise of that happiness which shall be given to them at the general resurrection; "God having provided some better thing for us; that they, without us, should not be made perfect³."

The prophecy contained in this Seal has been applied to different periods of the Christian history by different commentators; by Mede and his followers to the martyrs in the Diocletian persecution; and by Vitringa to the Waldenses, Albigenses, and the other martyrs, who, in different ages, have suffered under the Papal Church. "But," as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "there seems to be no reason why it should be restricted to any particular body of martyrs of any particular period. All are to be avenged; and it may perhaps be more fitly

¹ Gen. iv. 10. Hebr. xii. 24.

² Vitringa, p. 273, 4.

³ Hebr. xi. 39, 40.

understood to comprehend all the martyrs to the Christian cause from the apostolical age to the time when such sufferings shall finally cease⁴."

6. The *sixth* Seal represents to us the closing scene of this interesting prophecy; in the first place, in the execution of God's vengeance on the enemies of the truth; and, secondly, in the assurance of the preservation of his faithful servants, amidst the trials which the professors of the true religion will be destined to endure; and of the final reward and happiness of the righteous. .

(1) The *first* part of the prophecy contained in this Seal, is comprised in the closing verses of the sixth chapter; in which, under the same splendid imagery in which the prophets of old described the execution of God's vengeance on the adversaries of his religion, he has foretold the final destruction of the enemies of the truth⁵. Commentators⁶ have remarked, that the events, to which these prophecies had *immediate* reference, fall far below the awful character of the language in which they are described; and have, therefore, justly concluded, that, like the events themselves, they are typical of and will have their complete fulfilment in that more awful destruction, which will fall on the enemies of the Redeemer, in the day of his power; when he shall come forth, as he is described in a subsequent part of this prophecy, to execute vengeance on the adversaries of his truth;—with a farther view to that more awful destruction at the last day, "when

⁴ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 148.

⁵ For a more complete illustration of this splendid imagery, see the valuable notes of Dean Woodhouse *ad loc.* (pp. 169—175), where he has illus-

trated and vindicated the spiritual character of ancient prophecy. Compare also Vitrina, pp. 281. 292, 3.

⁶ See W. Lowth on *Isai.* xxxii. 14. and xxxiv. 5, &c.

the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" and all the workers of iniquity will be finally and entirely destroyed.

This, as it has been shewn, is in perfect conformity with the character of Jewish prophecy, considered as belonging to a dispensation, which was only typical of that more perfect and spiritual dispensation which was to follow it¹. And the prophecy contained in this Seal, as it proves, in what light we are to regard all those prophecies of the Old Testament which immediately resemble it, so also does it confirm,—what ought never to be lost sight of in the interpretation of this book,—the indissoluble character of the connection which is found between every part of the two dispensations.

But it is impossible to dismiss the consideration of this part of the prophecy, without one remark,—the awful warning which it affords to all unrighteous and ungodly men, and, especially to all the enemies of the truth. The belief, that any human being, who has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, can be so far regardless of the duty and the gratitude which he owes to his great benefactor, as deliberately to oppose himself to that religion for which the Redeemer shed his blood, is at all times painful to a religious mind: but this feeling must be greatly increased by this description of the Lamb—the meek and merciful Saviour,—coming to execute his terrible judgments upon his enemies; when all the wilful opposers of his truth will be filled with horror and dismay; when “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains,

¹ See chap. ii. p. 29.

and the mighty men, and every bond-man and every free-man shall hide themselves from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Who can think without awe of the *wrath* of the *Lamb*?

(2) The *second* part of the prophecy contained in this Seal, and which forms the subject of the seventh chapter, relates to the assurance which it holds forth of the preservation of the faithful servants of the Redeemer, amidst the afflictions which the professors of the true religion will be destined to endure, and of the final reward and happiness of the righteous.

This prophecy appears not to be limited merely to that awful period of terror and dismay, when the enemies of the true religion will be finally destroyed; but to have reference to all the trials, which the professors of the true religion were destined to endure, from the period when the prophecy was delivered to the great consummation of all things. This appears evident from the third verse of this chapter, in which the angel, who descends from heaven, commands the four angels to withhold their desolating power, until they had marked the servants of God in their foreheads. The period of its fulfilment has been by some commentators, for instance, Hammond and Lightfoot, confined to the destruction of the Jewish state and people; by others, to the persecutions which the Church endured before the time of Constantine; by others, to those which were to be directed against it by its anti-christian enemies. It is probable that we shall arrive more nearly at the true meaning and spirit of the prophecy, if we believe it to be co-extensive with the prophecy con-

tained in the fifth seal, and understand it of the merciful preservation and protection, which the Almighty will vouchsafe to all his faithful servants *in all ages*, amidst the severe trials which may fall upon his Church; but more particularly in that last and greatest trial, in which the enemies of the Redeemer will be finally destroyed. *Such* a view of this prophecy is highly worthy of our belief of the infinite power and the infinite compassion of our Redeemer;—of that infinite “power, which is given unto him in heaven and in earth,” and which he is ever exerting for the advancement and protection of his Church and his religion,—of that tenderness and compassion, with which we are assured, that he looks down from his throne of glory and majesty in the heavens, upon the trials and the sorrows of his faithful servants: and the whole doctrine derives great support from our belief of his Incarnation. For as “he hath a feeling of our infirmities, having been in all things tempted like as we are, and yet without sin;” so “is he able also to save all them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them¹.” *Such* was the consolation, which our blessed Lord gave to his faithful servants, under the trials to which they would be exposed amidst the terrors which would attend the destruction of Jerusalem; and such is the consolation, with which the Christian may support himself under *every* trial, —“In your patience possess ye your souls. There shall not an hair of your head perish².”

There is something very sublime in the opening of the seventh chapter, in which the angels are

¹ Hebr. iv. 15; vii. 25.

² Luke xxi. 18, 19.

described as "holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." This is perfectly agreeable to the Scripture imagery, in which the winds are described as being shut up in the treasure-houses of the Almighty³; and by their being sent forth upon the earth is represented the sending of the divine judgments upon the world⁴. But these judgments, which, it is thus declared, shall befall the Christian Church, are not permitted to be sent forth, until the servants of God shall be so marked by the Holy Spirit, as to be separated and saved apart from those whom he now consigns to punishment. An angel is described as descending from heaven, having the Seal of the living God, and commanding the ministers of divine vengeance to stay the destruction, till the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. It was thus, when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Chaldeans, that an angel was sent to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sighed and who cried for all the abominations that were done in the midst thereof⁵:" and it is thus that the Almighty vouchsafes to protect all his faithful servants amidst the trials, with which it pleases him to afflict his Church.

"The Seal of God is his mark by which 'he knoweth them that are his'⁶.' Under the Law of Moses, circumcision is represented to be the *Seal* which separated the people of God from 'the heathen who did not call upon his name.' But in the Gospel, this divine Seal is more accurately described to be

³ Psal. cxxxv. 7.

⁵ Ezek. ix. 4.

⁴ Dan. vii. 2; Jerem. li. 1; iv. 11, 12.

⁶ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

the Holy Spirit of God. They who have this Spirit, *are marked as His*¹. Our Lord Jesus Christ is described as possessing eminently this mark². By the Seal of God, then, is signified that impression of the Holy Spirit upon the heart of man, which preserves in it the principles of pure faith, producing fruits of piety and virtue. This is the Seal which marks the Christian, as the *property* of the Almighty, and consequently under his providential protection³." The divine vision, then, stretching forth into the ages of eternity, exhibits the innumerable multitudes of the redeemed as standing before the throne, with white robes and palms in their hands, the emblems of their salvation and triumph. Such is the interpretation, which is placed upon it by the angel himself, when he describes them as "having come out of great tribulation, and as having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb⁴." With regard to the number of those who are sealed, the 144,000, from the tribes of Israel,—the number is evidently *mystical*⁵; as is evident, amongst other reasons, from the omission of the tribe of Dan, and the re-admission of that of Levi. "This tribe had been excluded, because, separated for the priesthood, it had its provision in another form; but now, being to enter on the heavenly Canaan, where there is no temple; where all are priests to God: there is no longer

¹ 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13; iv. 30.

² John vi. 27.

³ Woodhouse, p. 183.

⁴ Rev. vii. 14. See Vitringa, p. 315.

⁵ Woodhouse, p. 187. Numerus ille 144,000 millium erat mysticus et allegoricus, et vere significabat totam eamque maximam multitudinem Electorum, a Deo ex communi illa calamitate

conservandorum. Joannes itaque absque allegoria et figura Electos descripturus ait, se vidisse magnam et non facile numerandam hominum turbam: ne quis cogitaret, numerum Electorum, ex afflictione et calamitate conservandorum, numero illi 144 millium, quem ipse expresserat, adstrictum esse." Vitringa, Ib.

need of a peculiar priesthood: and therefore this tribe seems properly to resume its ancient station among the brethren. And this view of the vision is not only perfectly agreeable to the spirit of ancient prophecy, in which the members of the Christian Church are described as spiritual Israelites; but also derives confirmation from the description of the temple in Ezekiel, which, as we have seen, is evidently mystical, and from the measuring of the temple described in the eleventh chapter of this prophecy, which has reference to the Christian Church⁶. With regard to the number of the sealed, they may be supposed to consist either of *lineal* or of *adopted* Israelites. If we should suppose them to consist of the *former*, it would be perfectly agreeable to the order of the divine dispensations; according to which, as we believe the faithful Israelites to have been the first in spiritual privileges in this world, so also will they be in their final reward⁷. And these would be followed, in perfect consistency with the same order, by the innumerable multitudes of the redeemed from every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue, who shall be admitted to serve him in his temple for ever and ever. But perhaps they may, with greater propriety, be understood of the *spiritual Israelites*, of the Church of the redeemed, who, having been found faithful amidst all their trials, will be finally admitted to their glory and their reward. Mede, Bishop Newton, and their followers, who have applied the four first Seals in chronological order to the history of the Roman empire, and explain the fifth Seal of the sufferings of the Christians during the Diocletian

⁶ See chap. ii. pp. 29—31.

⁷ Rom. ii. 9—11.

persecution, understand the sixth Seal to exhibit the happy change which took place, on the elevation of Constantine to the Imperial throne. It is evident, however, that the condition of the Christian Church, at this period, was in no respect answerable to the sublime language which is here employed by St John¹; which is applicable only, in its full extent, to that blessed state, when the faithful servants of the Redeemer will be released from sorrow and suffering, and when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes²."

PART III.

THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTH SEAL AND THE TRUMPETS.

SECT. I.

The opening of the seventh Seal, and the commission to the Angel with the seven Trumpets.

THE prophecies contained in the Seals present a rapid sketch of the history of the Christian Church, from the earliest times of the Christian history to the great consummation of all things. It is evident therefore, on this supposition, that the prophecies contained in the Trumpets cannot, as some commentators on the Apocalypse have believed, be subordinate to those of the Seals; but that we must look for them in some events connected with the history of the Christian Church, which are cotemporaneous with those which are contained in the Seals. But, on considering the general outline of Christian history which is contained in the Seals,

¹ See these opinions examined at length by Dean Woodhouse, pp. 190—197. *Annotations*, pp. 159—196.

See also a refutation of the hypothesis of Mede by Vitringa, pp. 235, 236.

² Compare chaps. xxi. xxii.

it is evident, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, that many important intervals remain yet to be filled up under the seventh Seal, which will be found to contain *all* the prophecies remaining; and by retracing the history of the Christian Church, to supply many events which were reserved for a more particular notice and display. "This method of divine prediction," he observes, "presenting at first a general sketch or outline, and afterwards a more complete and finished picture of events, is not peculiar to this prophetical book. It is justly observed, by Sir Isaac Newton, that 'the prophecies of Daniel are all of them related to each other,' and that 'every following prophecy adds something new to the former³.' To this we may add, that the *same* empires in Daniel are represented by various types and symbols. The four parts of the Image, and the four Beasts, are varied symbols of the *same* Empires. The bear and the he-goat, in different visions, represent the same original; and so do the ram and the leopard. We are not therefore to be surprised, when we find the history of the Church beginning anew, and appearing under other, yet corresponding types; and thus filling up, with additional and important information, the outlines which had been traced before⁴."

The following is the account of the opening of the seventh Seal, and of the commission to the Angels with the seven Trumpets.

CHAP. VIII. 1—5.

"AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was 1
silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw 2
the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were

³ Sir Isaac Newton on Daniel, Part 1. c. 3.

⁴ Woodhouse, p. 197.

3 given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood
 at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given
 unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the
 prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before
 4 the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with
 the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the
 5 angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it
 with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there
 were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earth-
 quake."

A silence in heaven for the space of half an hour accompanies the opening of the seventh Seal. This silence is supposed to bear allusion to the silence, which prevailed in the Jewish temple during the offering of the incense¹. There is, however, this distinction between it and the silence which is represented as accompanying the opening of the seventh Seal, that, in this instance, it precedes the offering of the incense, in the other it accompanied it: and "this silence," therefore, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "though it may bear a certain degree of allusion to the temple-service, and may even be supposed to continue during the service which follows, seems to be exhibited for another purpose; to denote a change, in the mode, or in the subject of the prophecy; to disunite the succeeding scene from that which had gone before; to unfold a new chain of prediction²." The angel is then represented as taking the censer, and filling it with fire from the altar, and casting it to the earth; which was followed by "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." By this symbolical action is represented the fate of the Christian religion in the world; which, though pure and heavenly in its origin, yet, being sent down to earth, and mixing

¹ Woodhouse, p. 200.

² Luke i. 10. Levit. xvi. 17.

with the passions and worldly designs of men, produces discord, and confusion, and tumult³.

PART III. SECT. II.

The first four Trumpets.

VIII. 6—12.

“And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.”

MEDE, Bishop Newton, and Lowman, explain the Trumpets of the different calamities, which befel the Roman Empire, from the incursion of the barbarous nations previously to its final dissolution. Vitringa supposes the two first Trumpets to be prophetic of the irruption of the barbarous nations upon the Roman Empire: but, in the third, he supposes to be represented a corruption of Christian doctrine, brought to pass through the agency of some eminent leader of heresy, whom he supposes to be Arius⁴.

³ See Woodhouse, pp. 203, 204. With regard to the connexion between this vision and that of Ezekiel, see

Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 171, 2.

⁴ Vitringa, pp. 357, 358.

And the fourth he understands to denote the degeneracy and corruption of the Christian clergy, which began to be notorious in the reigns of Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius: which was followed by a great loss of influence and authority on the part of the Church, and by the subsequent decline of the Roman Empire, both in splendour and in power.

But in examining those interpretations of this prophecy,—in which it has been attempted to explain the predictions which it contains, of the calamities which the Roman Empire experienced from the irruption of the barbarian nations,—the meaning, which has been attributed to the different symbols, not only appears forced and unnatural; but the events which are supposed to be pre-signified by them, do not appear to be immediately connected with the history of the Christian Church, nor to harmonize with what appears to be the great and leading object of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. If we compare the interpretations, derived from events relating to the Roman Empire, which have been applied to the Seals, with the principles which have been laid down in the second Chapter, as appearing to regulate the introduction of *temporal* events into ancient prophecy, how little connection have the events, which are supposed to be alluded to, with religion in general, and how little influence on it! And these observations apply still more strongly to the interpretations, which have been affixed by Mede and his followers to the prophecies contained in the Trumpets.

“There is,” as Dean Woodhouse has observed, “no reason why we should except the Trumpets from the general law which has been laid down with regard to the prophecies of this book,—that the Christian

Church is the main object of the Apocalyptic, and indeed, of all divine prophecy. It is, on the contrary, confirmed in their case by the preparation which we have just now contemplated. It is confirmed also by the fact, that in those visions of the Trumpets whose meaning can be most accurately ascertained, the Christian Church is evidently the object of assault. Such it is seen to be in the fifth and sixth Trumpets, and yet more clearly and confessedly in the seventh, where (in Chap. xi. 15.) upon the angels sounding, the heavenly voices immediately proclaim the victory, and award the kingdoms of the world to Christ; and that his Church is to partake the happiness and glory of his victory and reign, is apparent from the subsequent song of the Elders, and indeed from all holy writ. In this seventh and last conflict, the contending powers are fully declared: "we may reasonably, therefore," as Dean Woodhouse has justly concluded, "suppose them the same in all the stages of the warfare, under the first four Trumpets, as well as under the three last¹."

The sketch of Christian history thus regarded as being contained under the first four Trumpets, is passed over with great rapidity. (1) "The attack of the first Trumpet is upon the *earth*, *εἰς τὴν γῆν*, which being here contra-distinguished from the *sea*, (the object of the next Trumpet,) and being evidently only a part of the globe of the earth, that part which we call *land*, might be more fitly expressed in our language by the word *land*." Upon this division of the whole earth "fall hail and fire mingled with blood." Such a storm is described as falling upon Egypt, by the divine command, *literally* (Exod.

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 173, 174.

ix. 23, &c.) But here it must be received in its typical or spiritual sense. Now in the writings of the prophets, *הָאָרֶץ*, *the land*, as opposed to *the sea*, frequently signifies *the holy land*, the people of Israel; while the Gentiles, especially those of the west, are spoken of by the word *sea*¹. Upon the Christian Israelites, therefore, we may suppose that the storm of hail and fire mingled with blood—by which is generally understood the storm of persecution even unto death,—was destined to fall². This storm was to destroy the third part of trees, and all green grass, by which is meant the converts to the Christian religion; some of whom are “rooted and grounded in the faith;” others, having no root, cannot stand against the storm: and of these the third part were to be destroyed. In the same manner, with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was prophesied by Ezekiel and Zechariah, two-thirds of the people were to perish in the siege, and one-third were to go into captivity³.

(2) Upon the sounding of the *second* Trumpet, the hostile invasion of the anti-christian powers falls upon the *sea*; by which is to be understood, as has been already explained, the *Gentile Christians*, as they are distinguished from the *Jewish converts*. And this attack is described under the image of a burning mountain being cast into the sea. “A mountain,” as Dean Woodhouse has observed, “signifies an eminent seat of power, civil or religious.” In this sense, Babylon, an eminent seat of power and idolatry, hostile to true religion, is addressed as a

¹ Gen. x. 5; Isai. xxiv. 14, 15.
 Lx. 5, 9. xlii. 4. compared with Matt.
 xii. 21; Ezek. xxvi. 15, 16, &c.

² Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp.
 175, 176.

³ Ezek. v. 12; Zech. xiii. 8, 9.

mountain (Jer. Li. 25); "*Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain; I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks.*" To which is added, "I will make thee a burnt mountain;"—which words appear to point to the destruction of Babylon, which is so often foretold in other passages⁴. During the three first centuries, the idolatrous power was consuming away from the fire inflicted upon it from above, from the altar of true religion in heaven; but so long as it continued burning, the persecution by the idolaters raged grievously against the Gentile Churches, and great was the number of the lapsed⁵."

(3) Upon the sounding of the *third* angel, a great star is described as falling from heaven; of which the name is Wormwood. It is said to "fall upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter." Now, by a *star*, in prophetic language, is understood a prince, or some eminent person, Numb. xxiv. 17; Matt. ii. 2; and also a leader in doctrine, Rev. ii. 28. xxii. 16. Such an one falling from heaven, as did Satan, (Luke x. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 4; Jude 6; Rev. xii. 4. ix. 1—12.) corrupts the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters; that is, corrupts the streams and sources of pure doctrine, which are expressed by our Lord under the same metaphor, (John iv. 10, &c. vii. 37—39.) And this interpretation is confirmed by the remaining part of the description, which is given to the star; which is designated by the appellation of Wormwood, and of which

⁴ See W. Lowth ad locum.

⁵ See Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

the effect, when it falls upon the waters, is to make them bitter; under which image the corruptions of false doctrine are described in other passages of Scripture. (Compare Deut. xxix. 18. with Hebr. xii. 15. and Acts viii. 23.) Under these images are described those false doctrines, which, at the instigation of Satan, assailed the early Christian Church: and the death, described as following them, is spiritual¹.

(4) Upon the sounding of the *fourth* Trumpet, the same kind of stroke, which had fallen upon the other divisions of the creation, falls upon the heavenly luminaries, the sun, the moon, and the stars; and the third part of them is smitten, and ceases to give light. Under the symbolical imagery of the darkening of these luminaries, is represented, in the prophetic language of the Old Testament, the removal of that glory which was vouchsafed by the Almighty to his chosen kingdom and people². In the same manner, by the increasing splendour of these heavenly luminaries, are represented the increasing glories of the Christian dispensation³; and there is frequent allusion to this mode of expression in the Apostolical writings⁴. Under the imagery, therefore, which is contained under this Trumpet, is represented the spiritual darkness which followed the promulgation of those heretical opinions which were directly opposed to the great and vital doctrines of the gospel, and which so effectually obscured the purity and simplicity of the Christian faith⁵.

¹ See Woodhouse, *Ib.*

² Amos viii. 9, &c.; Matt. xxiv. 29.

³ "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold." Isai. xxiv. 23. xxx. 26.

⁴ Col. i. 12, 13; 2 Cor. iv. 6; 1 Thess. v. 4, &c.; James i. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John i. 5.

⁵ The exposition of these Trumpets is borrowed principally from Dean Woodhouse.

If we compare this view of the prophecies, which are contained in the Trumpets, with the opinions of those writers who would refer them to the fortunes and destinies of the Roman Empire, it appears to be more agreeable, both to the legitimate import of the symbols themselves, and to what may be regarded as constituting the general scope and meaning of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. It is also uniform: and thus, at the same time that it harmonizes with the view which has been taken of the prophecies contained in the Seals, avoids the inconsistency, which may appear to attach to the opinions of those persons, who, with Vitranga, would apply them, partly to the affairs of the Christian Church, and partly to the affairs of temporal kingdoms. And the importance of this principle of uniformity was felt by Mede, when he observed that the Trumpets should be interpreted as being *all of one kind or nature*, or, as he expresses it, *homogeneal*; and that “to make some of them warlike invasions, and others to be heresies, is to bring things of too differing a nature under one name⁶.” Though this desire of adhering to system was the means of leading him into error: because after having first supposed warlike invasions on the Roman Empire to be the object of the first four Trumpets, he involved himself in the still greater inconsistency of supposing that the Roman Empire was the subject of attack in *all* the Trumpets, a supposition which is manifestly untenable; and which has not been adopted even by those who have in other respects adopted the opinions of Mede. For in what respect can the Roman Empire be said to have been pecu-

⁶ Mede, *Works*, p. 595. Woodhouse, p. 221.

liarily the subject of attack from the Mahometan apostacy? The Trumpets, considered as having reference to the Christian Church, afford a general view of the warfare which it underwent soon after its first establishment¹. Nor can we object to the latitude of interpretation which must necessarily be affixed to them on this supposition: because the symbols themselves are of a very general character: and after all, even under the supposition of the greatest latitude of interpretation which can be attributed to them, they are not exposed to the same uncertainty, which attaches to the expositions of those persons, who have explained them with reference to the Roman Empire.

PART III. SECT. III.

The Denunciation of the three Woes.

VIII. 13.

- 13 "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

THE four preceding Trumpets had revealed, in general terms, the attacks which the Christian Church was to experience during its earliest period from its anti-christian foes. But here the Divine Messenger, passing through the midst of heaven, proclaims aloud three more dreadful woes, which, under the three remaining Trumpets, were to befall it. Even in Apostolical times, "the mystery of iniquity" was said to be "already working:" during the first four Trum-

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 181.

pets its effects were more visibly seen: and during the last three, the complete revelation of its desolating mischiefs will be completely and finally “revealed².”

PART III. SECT. IV.

The fifth Trumpet and the first Woe.

CHAP. IX. 1—12.

“AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from 1
heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the
bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there 2
arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace;
and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke
of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the 3
earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of
the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they 4
should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing,
neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of
God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they 5
should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five
months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion,
when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek 6
death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death
shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like 7
unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it
were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.
And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were 8
as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were 9
breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the
sound of chariots, of many horses running to battle. And they 10
had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their
tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And 11
they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottom-
less pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but
in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is 12
past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.”

THE voice of the angel, which preceded the sound-

² 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8.—“Hoc emblemata accipimus,” says Vitringa, “ut διδακτικόν, doctrinale, tanquam quo Spiritus S. Joannem, et in Joanne Ecclesiam, docere voluerit et monere, calamitates sequentium Tubiciniorum

longe fore graviore^s malis precedentium temporum. Idque certe nobis ex ipsis illis Visis, et eorum vera interpretatione, abunde constabit.” p. 369. Compare also Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

ing of the fifth Trumpet, prepares us to look for a more full revelation of those things, which under the former Trumpets had only been *partially* revealed. And considering what has been before said with regard to what appears to be the great scope of the Trumpets, and the general design of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, we are led to look for a continuance of that anti-christian warfare on the Church, which, though it had an existence in the Apostolical times, had been more fully revealed under the preceding Trumpets. Let us consider how far this view of the prophecy is confirmed by the language of the Trumpet itself¹.

1. In the first place, "a star" is seen to fall from heaven. By a *star*, as we have seen, in the symbolical language of prophecy, is represented a religious teacher, a prince, or a leader in doctrine²: and under this image, in the third Trumpet, an evil angel, probably Satan himself, is represented as descending from heaven, and corrupting the fountains of waters, by which are understood the pure and heavenly doctrines of life and immortality. Upon the descent of this star, this leader of iniquity had begun his evil ministry, by embittering, by corrupting the waters of life. "This corruption, in which we have seen him successfully employed, produced those *beginnings* of darkness, ignorance, and superstition, which were disclosed under the fourth Trumpet. Upon the blast of the fifth Trumpet, this evil increases. To these beginnings of darkness, he is permitted to add the smoke and the machinations of

¹ In support of this view of the purport of the prophecy contained in this Trumpet, consult the authors quoted in the beginning of the Commentary

on this Chapter contained in Pole's Synopsis.

² Rev. i. 20. viii. 10, 11.

hell. It is by *permission* that he opens this source of infinite mischief: for the keys of death and of hell belong to another power, even to the Lord of life³. But “the Spirit of God will not always strive with man⁴.” The wilful and reprobate are at length given up to the just consequences of their wilfulness. The key of the great infernal deep, (whence are the βαθὴ τοῦ Σατανᾶ, *the depths of Satan*⁵, those black and corruptive doctrines which destroy the splendour and purity of the Church,) is given to the fallen star, the fallen angel, “the prince of the power of the air; the power of darkness,” that “spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience⁶.”

Upon the opening of the bottomless pit, smoke issues forth darkening the sun and the sky, and a swarm of locusts also comes forth out of the smoke. But they evidently are not natural locusts. (1) They are armed with scorpions, and their sting is in their tails. (2) They are commanded not to hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, (which is the natural food of locusts,) but *men*; and yet not *all* men, but only those *who have not the seal of God in their foreheads*. This evidently points out the attack to be of a *spiritual* character: and therefore we may conclude that the locusts are spiritual. (3) They are not permitted to kill men, but only to torment them for a limited period. “And in those days men shall seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, but death shall flee from them.” In how affecting a manner do these expressions declare the wretched state of a soul, de-

³ Chap. i. 18.

⁴ Gen. vi. 3.

⁵ Chap. ii. 24.

⁶ Ephes. ii. 2; Luke xxii. 53. See Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

prived of spiritual life, and abandoned to the darkness of misery and despair! (4) But, moreover, there are other characteristics belonging to them, which prove them not to be natural locusts. "They have upon their heads, as it were, crowns of gold. The true golden crown is the proper ornament of Christ himself, of his elders, of his followers, of those who overcome sin and the world by his example and power¹. These imposing enemies of the true faith, have crowns, not of gold, but *as it were of gold*: they deceive under the appearance of true religion²." "Their faces are the faces of men; and they had hair as the hair of women." They deceive by a specious shew of human reasoning. (5) The violence of their attack is described in corresponding symbols. "Their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle." (6) Lastly, to confirm their spiritual character, they have for their leader the angel himself of the bottomless pit,—even him, who is designated by the names Satan, Abaddon, Apollyon³.

The earlier commentators on the Apocalypse, therefore, with justice explained the prophecy contained in this Trumpet of some *heresy*⁴: and some

¹ Chap. iii. 12. ii. 12. iv. 4. vi. 2.

² Dean Woodhouse.

³ These marks, distinguishing these locusts from natural locusts, are pointed out by Vitringa from Bochart, p. 377.

⁴ "Contenta in hac visione omnes pene de hæreticis intelligunt." Gagneus apud Pol. Syn. This was the opinion of Bishop Horaley, as it was communicated to Dean Woodhouse by that learned writer, in a letter dated March 20, 1806; in which he expresses

his opinion in the following manner:

"I have received much pleasure in reading your exposition of the vision of the locusts. You have rescued that portion of the prophecy from much erroneous and absurd interpretation. I have for some years been fixed in the opinion, though I have never written upon the subject, that the apocalyptic locusts represent heretics, not soldiers." *Annotations*, p. 207.

writers of the middle ages, for instance, Bede, Haymo, Thomas Aquinas, and others, understand the locusts here mentioned to denote the heretics, the precursors of Anti-Christ⁵. Dean Woodhouse explains this Trumpet of the ravages, which were made by the Gnostic heresies on the Church; and there is so much ground of probability belonging to this view of it, that it deserves a more attentive consideration: though, as Vitringa has observed, the circumstance, that this prophecy has no exact parallel, either in the Old or the New Testament, must involve the explanation of it in so much greater uncertainty.

The opinions of the Gnostics, as has been before observed⁶, appear to have been almost contemporaneous with the first promulgation of the Gospel, and are alluded to in other parts of the New Testament. Of this description appear to have been the heretics, against whom the reasoning of St John is directed in his Gospel, in his first General Epistle, and in the early chapters of the Apocalypse: and St Paul appears to have had them in view in different passages of his Epistles. The opinions of these heretics appear to have arisen from the intermixture of the dreams of the Eastern philosophy with the doctrines of the gospel: and as they bear evident marks of this origin, so is it supposed to be especially alluded to in this figurative description of them in this chapter of the Apocalypse⁷. They appear to have struck at the root of all the great doctrines of the gospel. Some of them, as for instance the Cerinthians, denied the divinity of our Saviour: others denied the reality of his incarnation and death.

⁵ Vitringa, p. 378.

⁶ See chap. ii. 6.

⁷ See Dean Woodhouse on verse 8.

Their dreams partook of all the errors of the Sabellian and Nestorian heresies with regard to the person of Christ. In addition to this, they mixed up with the belief of the gospel all the errors of the Eastern philosophers, with regard to the origin of evil, the nature of the human soul, and the existence of two opposite principles of good and evil¹. But though these opinions had their origin very early after the first promulgation of the gospel, they do not appear to have formed a *prevalent heresy* before the times of Adrian, about A.D. 120; nor did they exist in the same character later than 270, though the Church was not entirely free from them for a considerable time after that period: but they carried great ravages into the orthodox profession of the Christian faith for 150 years, the period of duration, which is marked out for them in this prophecy².

It is true, indeed, that Tertullian, in treating on the subject of these heresies, does not mention their Eastern origin, and it is expressly denied by others³. This origin of them is however expressly maintained by Mosheim; it is strongly supported by the internal character of the opinions themselves, and by the fact that the East was the great scene of their operations. Such is the opinion of Brucker, who, in his critical history of philosophy, after speaking of a sect of Oriental philosophers in the first century, adds;—"And when many from that sect had

¹ For an account of the Gnostic heresies, see Mosheim *de Reb. Chr.* pp. 179, &c.; *Ecc. Hist.* Vol. I. Book I. Part II. Chap. 5.

² Verses 5—10. "They shall hurt men five months." See the whole of this question examined by Dean Woodhouse in his first work, pp. 236—249.

³ See this question, relative to the Oriental origin of the Gnostic heresies, examined by the Bishop of Lincoln, in his *Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries*, illustrated from the *Writings of Tertullian*, pp. 471, &c., and by Mosheim *de Reb. Christ.* pp. 183, 184 note.

betaken themselves to the Christian religion, and had preposterously attempted to unite their precepts to it, *hence there arose those swarms of heresies, which priding themselves in the name of Gnostics, like winged insects, went flying through all the churches of Asia and Africa*, and contaminated the simplicity of the most holy religion with the most absurd nonsense: and continuing their progress to the Jews also, and even to the Gentiles, miserably corrupted the national philosophy of both these; invented wild and monstrous notions, confirmed and increased a wide-reigning fanaticism, disseminated multitudes of spurious books, and corrupted the whole world with the very worst doctrines⁴."

This view of the prophecy contained in this Trumpet, derives considerable support from its connection with that, which, with a remarkable uniformity of opinion amongst the commentators, is agreed to be the subject of the following Trumpet,—the triumph of the arms and the apostacy of Mahomet. For the Gnostic opinions, thus prevailing throughout the East, produced an universal corruption of morals and doctrine amongst the Christian Churches, and thus, aided by the general ignorance and immorality which prevailed, prepared them for the easy reception of the Mahometan imposture. Indeed, Mosheim has justly observed, how much the corruptions, which were in-

⁴ Exque ea secta plures, cum ad Christianam religionem se contulissent, præceptaque sua cum hac præpostere conjungere conati essent, exorta esse illa hæresium examina, quæ Gnosticorum nomine superbientia, muscarum instar, per omnes Asiæ atque Africæ ecclesias pervolitarunt, et nugis ineptissimis simplicitatem sanctissimæ Religionis contaminarunt. Ad Judæos

quoque et ipos Gentiles progressa, domesticam utrorumque philosophiam misere corruerunt, sententiarum monstra excogitarunt, fanaticum late regnantem confirmarunt et auxerunt, librorum spuriorum segetes disseminarunt, pessimisque doctrinis totum commacularunt orbem. Brucker, *Hist. Crit. Philosoph.* Tom. 11. p. 639.

roduced into Christianity by the Nestorians, the Eutychians, the Monophysites, and others, and the bitter dissensions amongst these sects, contributed to the success of the imposture of Mahomet¹. Throughout Persia, India, Armenia, Arabia, Syria, and other countries of the East, there were vast numbers of Nestorian churches, all under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Seleucia²: and the same remarks, with regard to the prevalence and the consequences of the Gnostic heresies, may be made with regard to the African Churches. These consequences of the Gnostic opinions, which appeared so fatally in their disastrous effects on the purity and the integrity of the Christian faith, in those portions of the Christian world where these opinions were most extensively prevalent; and the fatal results, which followed from these corruptions of the Christian doctrines, in preparing the way for the more ready reception of the opinions of Mahomet,—are too obvious to be attributed to accident. Nor indeed can we be surprised at these consequences. Because the Gnostic opinions strike at the root of the great doctrines of the gospel: and those, who have once abandoned the great peculiarities of the Christian scheme, are prepared to fall a ready prey to every corruption of Christian truth, which may fall in their way. For it is a just and profound observation of a learned writer of the present day, that “Mahometanism is allied to every religious system of merely *human* invention, in this one respect, that *it makes no provision for man's redemption. It deprives men of that only foundation whereon to rest their hopes, an atonement for*

¹ Mosheim, *Eccl. Hist.* Sixth Cent. Book I. Chap. 11. Vol. I. pp. 315, 316. 4to. Ed.

² *Ib.* p. 316.

*sin*³." This is the direct and immediate tendency of the Christian heresies, to which allusion has just been made: and therefore we cannot be surprised, that those persons yielded a ready obedience to the dictates of the Mahometan imposture, who had previously been so well prepared for it by the rejection of the great peculiarities of the Christian faith. For "the code of Mahometanism, (as has been observed by the same writer⁴;) not only exhibits a strange compound of Jewish and Heathen errors, but comprises almost every heterodox opinion respecting the Christian faith, which is to be met with amongst ancient heretics. But (as has been shewn by a masterly writer of our own times⁵;) *the Arian heresy stands forth as its most prominent feature*. Mahomet's adoption of this heresy, (which seems in some degree to militate against his own superiority to Christ,) affords a striking proof of his eagerness to make proselytes of a party, which was at that time exceedingly numerous and powerful."

If such be the character and effects of the Gnostic heresies on the Christian world, it affords an ample justification of the learned writer, who was the first to promulgate the opinion, that they constitute the prominent subject in this prophecy. The opinions of the Gnostics, falling in with those of the philosophic heretics,—which, we may observe, were most prevalent at an early period in those countries where the Gnostic heresies had flourished⁶,—led to that great

³ Bishop Van Mildert's *Boyle's Lectures*, Vol. I. pp. 221, 222.

⁴ Whitaker's *Origin of Arianism*.

⁵ Bishop Van Mildert, *Ib.* pp. 202, 203.

⁶ One of the earliest patrons and

supporters of the Arian opinions, was Paulus of Samosata, who, through the influence of the celebrated Zenobia, was raised to the see of Antioch, A.D. 260. From hence his opinions were propagated over the East and into Egypt.

prostration of religion, which accompanied the Arian controversy; and finally tended to produce a state of things still more disastrous to the Christian faith. Nor can we be surprised, that the extravagancies of Gnosticism finally sunk beneath the attacks of the philosophical infidels; and gave way to a system, not less hostile indeed to true religion, though more flattering to the pride of human reason; and possessing greater attractions in an age, when the great principles of Christianity had so much fallen into decay.

The opinion of Mede and his followers, that the irruptions of Mahomet and his successors upon the eastern parts of the Roman Empire are shadowed forth in this prophecy, has been ably refuted by Vitringa¹, and especially by Dean Woodhouse². But the exposition, which Vitringa proposes to substitute for this of Mede, is liable to the same, if not to greater objections. The irruption of the Goths upon the Roman Empire, which is proposed by Vitringa, does not appear to answer the ends with which *temporal* subjects are introduced into sacred prophecy: and it is impossible to peruse the exposition, which Vitringa has given of this Trumpet in conformity with his own views, without feeling, how far it falls below the solemnity with which it is introduced; and the dignity of the language in which it is conveyed³.

The opinions of some Protestants, who have supposed that some of the different orders in the Romish

Egypt. For an account of Paulus and his opinions, vide Euseb. v. 30; Mosheim *de Reb. Chr.* Sect. III. cap. 35.

¹ Vitringa, pp. 387, &c.

² Pp. 249—252, and *Annotations*, pp. 199—208, where he has also given from Mant and Doyley's Bible, a summary of the opinions of Mede and his followers.

³ This is particularly the case with the exposition which he has given of the passage,—“in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it,”—an exposition which is very feebly fulfilled in any distresses which were experienced during the siege of Rome by the barbarians. See Vitringa, p. 394.

Church, as the Dominican Friars and the Jesuits⁴, and of Bellarmine and others, that Luther and his followers, are particularly pointed out in this prophecy, are only alluded to in this place,—as affording instances of the application of Scripture prophecy to subjects, which fall beneath the greatness and sublimity of its object; and in which prejudice has a far greater share than any just and sound views of Scriptural interpretation.

PART III. SECT. V.

The sixth Trumpet and second Woe.

CHAP. IX. 13. XI. 14.

THE subjects included in the sixth Trumpet and second Woe, are contained between the twelfth verse of the ninth chapter, and the fifteenth verse of the eleventh chapter; and may be distinguished into two great divisions: the *first* of which comprehends the events, which are consequent upon the loosing of the four angels, who were bound on the river Euphrates; the *second*, those, which are comprehended in the prophecy of the Little Book.

THE FIRST PART OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

CHAP. IX. 13.

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from 13
the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying 14
to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels
which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four 15
angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a
day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

⁴ Vitringa, Ib. pp. 379, &c.

- 16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.
- 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which
- 18 issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and
- 19 had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:
- 20 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

“It is observed by Vitringa, that the principal commentators have differed less in their opinion upon this vision,—the second woe and sixth trumpet,—than upon most others. It has been very generally explained to prefigure the terrible invasions and devastations by the nations adopting the Mahometan creed, the Saracens, the Turks, the Tartars, by some or all of them; and Michaelis, who is backward in giving his approbation to any exposition of these visions, has declared that this prophecy may be very well applied to the irruptions of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars¹.” We have before remarked on the universal corruption of religion and morality, which prevailed in those countries, where the arms and the imposture of Mahomet obtained their earliest triumphs: and the circumstances of the vision bear testimony to it. The altar, which is here described, is the golden altar of incense, which, in the scenery of these visions, is seen to stand before the throne, as, in the Holy of Holies

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations* ad locum. Vitringa, p. 480. Michaelis, *Introd. New Test.* Chap. xxiii. Sect 7.

in the Temple, it stood before the Cherubim, the local throne of Jehovah. It was on this altar that atonement was made annually for the sins of the people; and it was from above this altar that the glory of the Lord appeared, when he gave his commandments to his chosen people². A voice, the voice of God, or of the Redeemer himself³, issues forth from between the horns of this altar, commanding the angel with the trumpet to release the angels which were bound in the river Euphrates; by which are intended the evil angels, into whose power those nations were delivered, and who were appointed by the Almighty, as the ministers of divine vengeance to that portion of the Christian world, which was especially marked out for punishment. "They were bound there, that is, not permitted to move in the execution of their appointed commission, till a certain hour, day, month, year, when the iniquity of *the men* should be ripe for such a punishment⁴." Mede and other commentators have endeavoured to point out four particular tribes or nations, who were settled upon Euphrates, who were especially singled out as the ministers of the divine vengeance. But "though the vision seems to imply some such Euphratean origin of the evil; yet that *four* nations or tribes were to come from thence for the execution of the commission, seems not to be fairly deduced. The number *four* is used in prophecy indefinitely for a large and perfect number. Thus "the four winds of heaven" comprehend the whole globe divided into

² Exod. xxx. 1—10. See *Woodhouse Annot.* ad locum.

³ Pol. Syn. ad locum.

⁴ Woodhouse ad locum. This view of the subject is in perfect agreement

with the doctrine contained in other parts of Scripture. Comp. Dan. x. 13, 20. Zech. vi. 1—8. Rev. vi. 4—8; and W. Lowth's note on Dan. x. 13.

its quarters, (Dan. xi. 4. Matth. xxiv. 31. Rev. vii. 1); and the angels, being four, answering to the four cardinal points of the altar, appear to imply the fulness of the decree and severity of its operation¹. "But," as Bishop Newton has observed, "such a voice, proceeding from the four horns of the golden altar, is a strong indication of the divine displeasure; and plainly intimates that the sins of men must have been very great, when the altar, which is their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance²."

It has been observed, that the prophecy, contained in this vision, has been applied by the commentators, with a remarkable uniformity of interpretation, to the irruptions of the Saracens, the Turks, and the Tartars: but there are also some points, in which it may be said to resemble the preceding vision; which, it has been shewn, is to be understood of some great and corrupt heresy which overspread the Christian world. We will, in the first place, consider some of the points in this vision, which appear to mark it out as designating a *real* warfare. Some of these have been noticed by Dean Woodhouse: we will mention some of them.

1. A swarm of locusts, and an innumerable army of invaders, are in Scripture used metaphorically for each other. Yet a difference may be observed between them. The locusts described in the vision of the fifth trumpet are said to be *like* war-horses; the other *are* war-horses. The attack under the

¹ Woodhouse ad locum.

² "Ut olim cum Deo *sacra* non fierent in hoc altari a filiis Aaronis Nadabo et Abihu (Lev. x. i.), secundum ritum ab ipso præscriptum; ignis e Sancto S. prodiiit eosque consumpsit:

sic mandatum hic *prodit*, ex *ipsis* hujus *altaris* *cornibus*, *unius* *vocis*, quæ Christi vox est, *de Angelis destructo-ribus* *solvendis*, et impietate mundi ac Christianismi vindicanda." Vitringa, p. 419.

sixth Trumpet has therefore more *real* warfare in it than that of the fifth; which only *resembles* warfare, being metaphorically such.

2. The angel of the *fifth* Trumpet leads his invaders from the grand seat of all impurity, from the depths of hell. The assailants of the *sixth* come from Euphrates.

3. *The swarm of locusts* is commissioned to *torment*, not to *kill*; and the *unsealed only* are the objects of their rage. The *armies of cavalry* *kill* one third of the Christian world: and there seems to be no return to life; as in Zech. xiii. 8, they are totally cut off from God's people.

4. The attack of the fifth Trumpet is not ordained, as that of the sixth is, to be a *plague*, or punishment, upon the *idolatrous*, and such an one as should produce no amendment.

To these remarks may be added, that the immense numbers of these invading armies are expressed in terms, indefinite indeed in themselves, but such as are used in other parts of Scripture to express prodigious quantities³: and the splendid dresses of the horsemen are applicable to those of the Saracen cavalry.

At the same time, the destruction, which is inflicted by them by means of their tails, and by the smoke and fire which proceed out of their mouth, is symbolical of the corrupt and false doctrines, which would accompany this destructive and devastating warfare⁴.

When, therefore, we consider the peculiar character of the warfare which is here described, and

³ Dan vii. 10. Psal. lxxviii. 17.

⁴ Vitringa, p. 408:—Woodhouse, *Annot.* pp. 212, 213, Bp. Newton.

of those corruptions also in the Christian Church, which are said to be the objects of the divine vengeance, commentators appear with justice to have looked to that period, when the corruptions of the Christian Church had arrived at their greatest height; and when the immense hordes of Saracen invaders overran so great portion of the Christian world, that they may be said to have destroyed the third of *the men*, that is, of *the Christian men*; for *these* must we understand to be pointed out in the prophecy. Only, in considering the application which has been made of this vision to the different irruptions of different Mahometan nations, it will be useful to attend to the following suggestion of Dean Woodhouse, "that the symbols of this vision, although more strictly applicable to the first grand irruption by Mahomet and his Saracens, may not unfitly be so applied, as to comprehend them all¹."

THE SECOND PART OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

THE *second* part of the sixth Trumpet relates to the opening of the Little Book, the measuring of the Temple, and the Witnesses. The *former* part of the prophecy is comprehended in the *tenth* chapter; the *latter* part is the subject of the *eleventh* chapter to the close of the fourteenth verse.

Sect. 1. *The Little Book.*

CHAP. X.

- 1 "AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 215. See also the notes to his former Work, Chap. ix. 13—21.

his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2
 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right 3
 foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with 3
 a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, 4
 seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven 4
 thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and 5
 I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those 6
 things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 6
 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the 5
 earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that 6
 liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things 7
 that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, 7
 and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should 7
 be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh 7
 angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should 8
 be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. 8
 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, 8
 and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand 9
 of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9
 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the 9
 little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and 10
 it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet 10
 as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, 10
 and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as 11
 soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto 11
 me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, 11
 and tongues, and kings."

"In the thirteenth verse of the eighth chapter, three grand woes, three distinct periods of successful attack upon the Church by the anti-christian powers, are announced. The first of these takes place immediately, and, in chap. ix. 12, is said to be *past*, and the second follows; but this, though it begins, like the first, with an hostile invasion, does not end in like manner. No period (as in the first woe of one hundred and fifty years) is assigned for its continuance; and when the description of the invasion is finished, no similar notice is given that the woe is ended. On the contrary, it seems to continue till the seventh Trumpet sounds (chap. xi. 14), when it is declared to be *past*. The whole prophecy had now begun to appear as drawing to

its close, for the seventh and last Trumpet was expected. But a new and enlarging scene opens under the remains of the sixth Trumpet, and before the end of the second woe. The famous period of forty-two months, or 1260 days, is here presented to view; the usurped dominion of the Mahometans continues with it. But there is another Anti-Christian usurpation, belonging to the same period, which is now to be prefigured¹."

These observations of Dean Woodhouse are very important: inasmuch as they clearly point out the connection between the prophecies, which are contained in this part of the sixth Trumpet and in that which immediately precedes it; a connection, which is so evident from the whole of this passage, and the consideration of which is very important to the proper understanding of the subsequent part of this prophecy. The Apostle describes the appearance of another angel descending from heaven. He is described as being distinguished by peculiar characteristics of glory and majesty; as being "clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth; and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices." But, amidst all these circumstances of surpassing and tremendous majesty, he is represented as being surrounded by the rainbow, the emblem of mercy and peace to fallen man. The characters of surpassing dignity, in which this angel appears, have made some commentators believe that he is the Son of

¹ Woodhouse ad locum.

God. But, as Vitranga has observed, he is here described as *another* angel²; distinguished, in this respect, both from the Son of God and the angels who sound the Trumpets: and he is supposed by Cocceius, whose opinion is in some degree adopted, though with great modesty and hesitation, by Vitranga³, to be the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the ever-blessed Trinity. But Dean Woodhouse has justly remarked, that "this angel, although displaying superior glory and power, is not our Lord Jesus Christ, who appears in this part of the vision, not as an angel, but as the Lamb. He is described to be *another* angel. Such *another* angel had been before seen officiating in the presence of the Lamb. He is an angel of the highest dignity, invested with a most important commission; to convey to St John and to the Church a large amount of prophetic information. For this purpose he holds in his hand a LITTLE BOOK; not little in respect to its contents, which are of the highest importance, but with a view to the purpose for which it was designed,—to be eaten and digested by the prophet. The Book is open, unsealed; by our Lord's merits it had become so. It was probably a part of the larger sealed Book which was opened by the Lamb, for it comes under the Seals which are not yet emptied of their contents. It may also be the same in part with the prophecies of Daniel, (chap. xii. 4, 9.) which were sealed in his time for a distant period; a period which will be seen to have relation to the times of these apocalyptic visions now coming into view⁴."

² Page 423.

³ The following is the remark of this learned man: "Nihil hic audacter definio; nec fieri illud posse videtur

sine temeritate. Sufficit intelligere, quod certum habeo esse *Personam Divinam*," p. 423.

⁴ Woodhouse, p. 278.

The events, which are described in the Little Book, are of sufficient importance to be made the subject of a separate revelation¹: and the peculiar solemnity, with which they are introduced, appears to direct our especial attention to them. After the sounding of the angel, seven thunders uttered their voices. But whatever might be the subject of this divine communication, the prophet is forbidden to disclose it²: but the angel, lifting up his hand to heaven, swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever, in whom alone the promises of Christ to his Church can be fulfilled³, *that there should be time no longer*. So is the original, *ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*, translated in the received Version. But it is evident, that we must seek for some other interpretation, in order that we may find a meaning consistent with the context; whether we explain it with Vitringa, that there should be no delay between the sounding of the seventh Trumpet and the fulfilling of the divine predictions⁴; or with Grotius, that the time would not be long, before the events, of which he was speaking, would be accomplished; by which he means, in conformity with his own hypothesis, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish people⁵; or with Daubuz, Lowman, and others, "*that the time should not be as yet*." Whichsoever of these explanations be the true one, "the whole passage," as Dean Woodhouse observes, "has a plain reference to *happy* times, which are expected with the seventh Trumpet, and which have been promised with *glad*

¹ Vitringa, pp. 426, 427.

² Compare Dan. viii. 8, 26; xii. 4, 9.

³ Comp. Dan. xii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 40. Jer. iv. 2. See Vitringa, p. 433.

⁴ Vitringa, p. 433.

⁵ Grotius ad locum: "Non diu erit, quin arcanum Dei compleatur. Nam χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι significat, *Non diutius res differetur*."

tidings under the Gospel. These times are mentioned as the *καίροι ἀναψύξεως*, "*the times of refreshing*;" *χρόνοι ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων*, "*times of restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began⁶." There is a great similarity in the two passages. The same *times* are likewise mentioned in Acts i. 7; and in both these places, as in this of the Apocalypse, the *χρόνος* is used without that prepositive article which expresses a particular designation of time. And yet our Translators have found it necessary to give that article in the English, (*the times, the seasons*), as the sense seemed to require it. It may be questioned, then, whether *χρόνος*, in this passage of the Revelation, without the article, may not be so translated and understood; and whether *the time*, which is not to be under the *sixth* Trumpet, may not be expected under the *seventh*⁷." It is *then* that we are led to look for that accomplishment of *the mystery of God*, which he hath "revealed unto his servants the prophets⁸." It is evidently the same distant period, which the angel, who appeared to the prophet Daniel, (who indeed is no other than the Son of God) had in view, when, upon the prophet asking him, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" he is described as holding up "his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swearing by him that liveth for ever, that it should be *for a time, times, and an half*; and, when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished⁹." Indeed, that the prophecy of Daniel had reference to

⁶ Acts iii. 19, 20.

⁷ Woodhouse ad locum.

⁸ Comp. Amos iii. 7.

⁹ Dan. xii. 6, 7.

a very distant period, is evident from the circumstances attending the Revelation. Because, upon the prophet inquiring, "What shall be the end of these things?" all farther inquiry is closed by the declaration, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed *to the time of the end*¹." St John, then, like his prototype Ezekiel, is commanded to take the book out of the angel's hand, and to eat it up: "and it was in his mouth as sweet as honey: and as soon as he had eaten it his belly was bitter²." The prophet was delighted with the privilege of being admitted to the knowledge of the mysterious counsels of the Almighty: but he was filled with sorrow, when he knew the subject of the prophecy, which was filled with "mourning, and lamentation, and woe³." St John then again receives his commission, by "a voice from heaven"—the same voice, which, on two former occasions in this chapter, had addressed him,—the voice either of God, as Vitringa has observed⁴, or of the Redeemer himself, from the throne, commanding him to prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. His former commission was to the seven churches of Asia. But their candlestick had been removed out of its place: and "as the Christian religion receded in the East, before the arms and doctrines of the Mahometans, it spread and enlarged in the West. A new scene and a new audience have now their commencement. The Gentile nations come into view; those ten kingdoms,

¹ Dan xii. 8, 9.

² Ezek. iii. 1—3.

³ Compare Jer. xv. 16—18: and compare the excellent remarks of Mr

W. Lowth on Jer. xv. 16. Ezek. iii. 2.

⁴ Vitringa, p. 439.

into which the remains of the Roman Empire were divided, are a principal part⁵.”

It is evident, therefore, if the view be a correct one, which we have taken of the prophecy which is contained in the preceding Trumpets, that the opinion of Mede is untenable, in which he supposes the former Trumpets to relate to the affairs of the Roman Empire; and that the present Chapter is to be considered as the Preface to a series of prophecies relating to the Church⁶. Indeed, as Vitranga has justly observed, it is impossible to believe that the SEALED BOOK, relating, on Mede's hypothesis, to the affairs of *temporal* kingdoms, should be opened with so much solemnity and awe, and that the LITTLE BOOK, containing a far nobler and more interesting prophecy, should be introduced under circumstances, which are not calculated to inspire us with any ideas of its superior dignity and importance. It is impossible, moreover, to believe, from the consideration of the prophecies of this book, that an entirely new course of prophecy should begin *in the middle* of this Trumpet; which, from considering the character, both of the *preceding* and the *succeeding* Trumpets, may be reasonably believed to relate to *the same description* of events, which are the subject of the preceding Trumpets, namely, the Christian Church. Nor can it be reasonably objected, that we have not attempted an exposition of the prophecies, which may be supposed to be contained in the seven thunders: because we may be content to remain in ignorance of that, which God himself has not been pleased to reveal⁷. The little success, which has attended

⁵ Woodhouse, *Annotations* [ad locum.

⁶ Vitranga, pp. 425, 6. 442. Mede's *Works*, p. 593. ⁷ Woodhouse ad loc.

attempts of this kind, may be seen in the different opinions with regard to the subject of the seven thunders, which are mentioned by Vitringa¹. Nor has he been more successful *himself*, in the attempt which he has made to remove the difficulty, in the application of them to the Crusades, which he distinguishes into seven different expeditions². The object of this prophecy, and of the solemn manner in which it is introduced to our notice, was doubtless to direct the attention of Christians to the great events, which are the subject of it; to teach every faithful believer, that, whatever trials the Church may be destined to endure, they were all foreseen in the counsels of infinite wisdom; and that the great Author of all evil can have no power against it, except what is permitted by Him, who will make all things work together for the glory of his name, and the final happiness and salvation of men³.

Sect. 2. The Measuring of the Temple, and the Witnesses.

CHAP. XI. 1—14.

- 1 "AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and
- 2 the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread
- 3 under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand
- 4 two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing
- 5 before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be

¹ Vitringa, p. 429.

² *Ib.* pp. 430, 1.

³ Compare the admirable reflections of Vitringa, pp. 437, 8.

killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not
 in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters
 to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues,
 as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their
 testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit
 shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and
 kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of
 the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt,
 where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people
 and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead
 bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead
 bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the
 earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send
 gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented
 them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an
 half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they
 stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which
 saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven say-
 ing unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to
 heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And
 the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth
 part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men
 seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave
 glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past: and,
 behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

ST JOHN now, in pursuance of the commission
 which was assigned to him in the preceding Chap-
 ter, enters upon his prophetic office, and he is com-
 manded to measure the Temple of God, and the altar,
 and them that worship therein; under which descrip-
 tion is designated the Temple itself, containing the
 Holy Place and the Holy of Holies; the altar of
 burnt-offerings, together with the court in which
 it stood, which was called the court of the Israelites;
 and those who were admitted to worship there. But
 with regard to the outer court, he is commanded to
 leave it out of this measurement; because it is given
 to the Gentiles; and they shall *tread it under foot*
 forty and two months, by which is to be understood,
 in the prophetical language⁴, the period of 1260 years;

⁴ Compare chap. ii. 10. According to the use of time in prophetical Scrip-
 ture, a day is often taken for a year. It is thus expressly ordered in Ezek.
 iv. 6;

being the same period, which is mentioned in the following verse, during which the Witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth. With regard to the imagery, under which the subject of this vision is conveyed, it is borrowed from that of the prophets Ezekiel (chap. xl, &c.) and Zechariah (chap. ii.); and therefore the purport of it is to be gathered, from what is understood to be the obvious meaning of the language, which is employed in these passages. There is, however, this difference between these corresponding passages of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse; that Ezekiel is commanded to measure, not only the Temple itself, but the outer courts and the land of Israel: whereas St John is commanded to measure only the Temple itself with the inner court. The outer courts are to be given up to the Gentiles.

Now the immediate object of the measuring of the Temple, as it was represented in vision to Ezekiel, and of the city of Jerusalem, as it was represented to Zechariah¹, was with the view of confirming the faith of the Jewish people, with regard to the preservation of their religion during their captivity, and the future restoration of their Temple and worship, on their return to their own land: and, in like manner, the object of this vision in the Apocalypse was to assure the prophet, and, through him, the Christian Church, of the preservation of the true religion during the long and dreary season of depression and corruption, through which it was destined to pass, during the period of the great anti-christian apostasy; and, though it would exist during this period amidst great difficulties and

iv. 6; and in earlier times, days were pronounced typical of years, as in

Numb. xiv. 34. Woodhouse ad locum.

¹ Zech. ii. 2—4.

desertion, to assure them of its final triumph. This condition of the true and sincere religion of the Redeemer, during this eventful time, is represented under the image of the two Witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and by the persecutions and trials, which they are described as enduring throughout this period of their trial: and, therefore, the interpretation of the words in the original, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσι μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο, which is given in our received Version,—“and the holy city they shall tread under foot forty and two months,”—is perhaps to be preferred to that of Dean Woodhouse, who translates them, “*the holy city shall they tread forty and two months;*” explaining πατήσουσι, according to the usage of the word in Isai. i. 12. and xxv. 10. compared with Psalm LXV. 4., of that worship, which the Gentiles, amidst many imperfections, would offer in the Christian Church during the period of 1260 years. This view of the meaning of the passage is approved by Vitringa²; and, above all, it is confirmed by the language of St Luke, (chap. xxi. 24.), who, in delivering the prophecy of our Saviour with regard to the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem, expresses it in the same terms which are here used by St John, καὶ Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἔσται πατουμένη ὑπὸ ἐθνῶν, ἄχρι πληρωθῶσι καιροὶ ἐθνῶν, and *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Amidst this general depression of true religion, it would be still kept alive by a succession of faithful men, who are here represented under the character of the two Witnesses; who would prophesy in sackcloth during the period of 1260 years, the appointed season of affliction to

² Page 449.

the Christian Church; and whose office, as the supporters of true religion, is pourtrayed under the prophetic imagery of the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the whole earth¹. As a proof of the *power*, with which God would endue them as the witnesses of his truth, it is said of them, as it was of the ancient prophets, that, "if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies²:" and they are to prophesy in the power and spirit of Moses, who turned the waters into blood; and of Elijah, at whose bidding the rain was miraculously withholden³. But, at the time appointed for the period of their ministry, the wild beast, who is to ascend from the bottomless pit, who in chap. xiii. is more particularly described, shall make war upon them, and overcome, and slay them; and shall prosecute his victory with such ferocious barbarity, as not to permit their remains the privilege of interment. Their bodies, like those of the massacred Jews under Sennacherib, are to be exposed in the public place or forum of the great city, of that idolatrous corrupt community, of which Sodom and Egypt, and Jerusalem in its most degenerate days, stained with the blood of the holy Jesus, were expressive types⁴. And the persons, who belong to this great and wicked community, consisting of "many people and kindreds, tongues and nations," (see chap. x. 11.) shall behold their dead bodies three days and a half; and shall make merry, and shall send gifts one to

¹ Compare Zech. iv. 1, 2; and see Vitrings and Woodhouse ad locum.

² "I will make my word in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." Jer. v. 14.

Compare also Isai. x. 17, &c. xi. 4; Jer. i. 9, 10; Hos. vi. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 8.

³ Exod. vii. 20; Jam. v. 17; 1 Kings xvii. 1.

⁴ Compare Psalm lxxix. 2, 3.

another⁵, and shall rejoice over them, as upon a formidable enemy destroyed. But after three days and an half, a spirit of life from God enters into them; to the astonishment and dread of the beholders, they live again; and, at the call of an heavenly voice, are seen by their enemies ascending to heaven in a cloud, as the Lord Jesus and their prototype Elijah had done before them⁶.

In reviewing the character of this prophecy, it is evident, both from the preceding prophecies of the Apocalypse, as well as from the express terms of this particular prophecy, that we are not to look for a *literal* accomplishment. For the dead bodies are represented as lying "in the streets of the great city, which is *spiritually* called Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified." It is evident, therefore, that in a *spiritual* sense only we are to understand the words Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem; for the great city which is called Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem, cannot be *all* of them, and therefore must be interpreted to signify some great body or society of men, which is *like them all*; resembling them all in the peculiar wickedness of each, as well as in rebellion against the Most High God, the common character of them all. Thus Jerusalem, in its corrupt days, is by the prophet called Sodom and Gomorrah⁷. In like manner, as Elijah was a type of John the Baptist, and therefore John is said to come "in the spirit and power of Elias⁸," nay "to be that very prophet⁹;" so is the whole description of these witnesses to be understood in a *spiritual*

⁵ Compare Esther ix. 19, 20.

⁶ See the exposition of this passage by Dean Woodhouse, from which the preceding paraphrase is principally taken.

⁷ Isai. i. 9, 10.

⁸ Luke i. 17.

⁹ Matt. xi. 4; Mark ix. 13.

sense, in their characters, their power, their sufferings, their resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and in their final and glorious reward¹; except that the description of the *death* of the witnesses may admit *also* of a *literal* accomplishment; because it is by this extreme description of persecution, that the enemies of religion have generally carried on their unhallowed warfare against the truth².

This exposition of the spiritual purport of this prophecy, and of the period of 1260 days or forty-two months, in which we are to look for its accomplishment, will lead us, therefore, to look for its fulfilment to that long season of darkness and oppression, during which the Papal power has held so extensive and mournful a sway in the Christian Church, and the apostasy of Mahomet has overspread so large a portion of the world. In the trials, which the Christian Church has at different times endured, and in the revivals of religion, which have taken place, and particularly at the Reformation, we may perhaps behold a *partial* fulfilment of the prophecy relating to the death and resurrection of the Witnesses. But with regard to some parts of it, for instance the final conflict of the beast with the Witnesses, and their death and resurrection, we must probably agree with Bishop Newton and Dean Woodhouse, that they *may* yet be to come. "The 1260 years," as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "beginning from the Saracen invasion, are not yet elapsed; and in a prophecy, of which parts only are yet fulfilled, there must remain difficulties."

With regard to that part of the prophecy which

¹ See Dean Woodhouse *ut supra*.

who observes, that "the *mystical* sense

² This is the opinion of Vitringa,

here involves the *literal*," p. 474.

is contained in the thirteenth verse, it is probably to be regarded as a prediction of the general breaking up of the great anti-christian apostasy, Mahometan as well as Papal. The language, in which this great convulsion is described, is in exact conformity with that of the prophetical writings in general, where they speak of the convulsions which will accompany the great revolutions in religion³. The tenth part of the city which falls, is not, as Mede has supposed, the city of Rome itself, but the whole community of the great anti-christian apostasy⁴; and the seven thousand who are slain, are to be understood, in the figurative language of prophecy, of the great destruction which would accompany this tremendous catastrophe. And when we consider the awful trials to the Christian Church, which are comprehended under this sixth Trumpet and second Woe; we may well believe, that so great a change in the moral and religious condition of mankind, may be accompanied by some evident display of Almighty power, not inferior to that, which accompanied the first triumphs of the Gospel over the powers and the darkness of the Heathen world.

It is evident, therefore, if this be a just view of this great and important prophecy, that *that* exposition of it is untenable, which, for obvious reasons, has been adopted by Bishop Bossuet and the Romanists, who have applied it to the Diocletian persecution; a persecution which lasted only for *ten* years;

³ Compare Haggai ii. 6, 7; Joel ii. 30, 31.

⁴ This is the opinion of Vitringa: "Liquet," he observes, "ex vers. 8, per τὴν πόλιν civitatem, in hac prophetia, non intelligi ipsam Urbem

Romam, sic proprie et stricte dictam, sed τὴν πολιτείαν, civitatem totam Imperii anti-christiani," p. 484. Comp. chap. xvi. 19. and Dean Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 346.

which was *prior* to the great persecution which is the subject of the first part of this Trumpet, the persecution arising from the Mahometan apostasy; and which in fact has been described before under the preceding Trumpets.

PART III. SECT. VI.

The seventh Trumpet.

XI. 15—19.

- 15 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall
- 16 reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces,
- 17 and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.
- 18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.
- 19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

THE angel had before declared to St John, under the preceding Trumpet, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, the mystery of God should be finished¹." The sounding of the seventh Trumpet, therefore, proclaims the destruction of the great anti-christian confederacy; in the annihilation of those two great apostacies, which have been the subject of the preceding Trumpets, and the complete and glorious establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer. Such appears to be the purport of the heavenly

¹ Chap. x. 7.

chorus, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ." The scene of this vision, as of those which precede it, is laid in the heavenly Temple; in which the prophet beholds a glorious multitude praising God, as on a solemn festival²; upon which the four and twenty elders fall down before God, and praise him, "because he had taken to him his great power and had reigned." For, as in the first preaching of the gospel, the nations were angry, and the rulers of this world "were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ³," so, in like manner, had the powers of darkness been arrayed for many ages in hostility to the mild and beneficent religion of the Redeemer. But the time is at length come, when God will render public justice to those who have died for his name⁴, in the final triumph of true religion, and the destruction of all the enemies of the truth. The interior part of the Temple, containing the ark of the covenant, which, under the Law, was accessible only to the High Priest, is now exhibited to public view; emblematical of that perfect revelation of the wonders and mysteries of the great scheme of redemption, which will accompany this final accomplishment of the dispensations of God.

In conclusion, the prophet describes the same commotions as attending this final establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, which have been before described as attending the other great revolutions of religion. Such appears to be the mystical mean-

² Vitringa, p. 507.

³ Psalm ii. 1, 2. cx.

⁴ "That the dead should be judged, &c." "Hoc est, martyres, qui mortem oppetierant causa Religionis, illo

tempore vindicarentur, quod stylo Scripturæ V. T. est *judicari*, ut Psalm. l. 4. lxxii. 4. lxxxv. 14. Vitringa ad locum. See also Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

ing of the lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and earthquake, and hail, which are represented as attending the disclosure of the ark of the covenant in the heavenly Temple¹. The same circumstances of awe and majesty accompanied the promulgation of the *old covenant* from mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16, &c.); and the same attends the re-production of the *new covenant*. But, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, “this is only a *preparatory scene*, and therefore only affords a *general* view of the wrath of God, which is seen especially poured out in the vision of the Vials, contained also under this Trumpet².”

The prophecy contained in this Trumpet has been applied by Grotius to the destruction of Jerusalem³; by other commentators to different periods of the Christian Church; and by others, again, to the day of judgment⁴. But Vitringa has shewn, in a satisfactory manner, that, as there has been no period of the Christian Church, in which “the kingdoms of this world can be said to have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ;” so, in like manner, such a description is entirely inapplicable to the day of judgment: and there are, in addition, other circumstances wanting, which are found in those descriptions of the final judgment, which occur both in this prophecy and in other parts of Scripture. The entire circumstances of the prophecy are applicable *only* to that blessed time, to which we are encouraged to look forward in this world, in a later and more advanced stage of the divine dispensations; when the kingdom of the Redeemer shall be finally

¹ Vitringa, p. 511.

² This is also the opinion of Duraeus apud Pol. Syn.

³ Grotius apud Pol. Syn.

⁴ Paræus, Andreas Cæsar, Aretas, and others. Vide Pol. Syn.

established, and all the enemies of the truth shall be destroyed⁵.

THE PREFACE TO CHAP. IV. PART IV.

WE are now arrived at another great division of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, which also consists of different smaller portions, in which the Holy Spirit has made a more full and complete revelation of the events of the Christian Church, which are the subject of the last two Trumpets. Those Trumpets have unfolded to us, briefly and obscurely, events of the greatest magnitude and the deepest interest, connected with the fortunes of the Christian Church to the great consummation of all things. They have portrayed in mournful colours the corruptions, which, in the course of ages, would pervade the whole body of the Church; the superstition, the idolatry, the wickedness, which would obscure the blessed light of the Gospel; the persecutions and the cruelty, which would be inflicted on the professors of the true religion by wicked and ungodly men, who would seek to establish their worldly power, by making religion the engine of their corrupt and ambitious views. But, under the image of the Witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, we behold a description of those holy men, who, in the most corrupt and darkest periods of the Christian Church, have opposed themselves to the reigning supersti-

⁵ See Vitringa, pp. 510—512. “Nos abunde persuasi sumes,” he observes, “agi hic de Fatis, quæ Ecclesiæ Christi Jesu in his terris subiret, et quidem

novissima temporis Ecclesiæ periodo, quæ diem Judicii universalis et consummationis omnium rerum præcederet.”

tions; and have kept alive the flame of religion, which, since the period of the Reformation, has been continually increasing in brightness, and will continue to increase, till it arrives at that full and perfect day, when the religion of the Redeemer will become universal. This argument constitutes the subject of the last two Trumpets. The afflictions of the Church, and the corruptions of the true religion, are the subject of the *sixth* Trumpet. The infliction of the divine judgments on the enemies of the truth, and the complete and final establishment of the religion of the Redeemer, are the subject of the *seventh* and last Trumpet.

The more perfect and complete delineation of these interesting events is the principal object, which is kept in view in the remaining portion of the Apocalypse; of which the rise and fall of the Papal apostasy is perhaps the great and prominent feature. This method of divine prediction, (as it has been before observed,) presenting at first a general sketch and outline, and afterwards a more complete and finished picture of events, is in perfect conformity with the general character of Scripture prophecy. It may be observed in all the great and leading prophecies of the Old Testament, and particularly in the prophecies of Daniel, which have so intimate a connection with the prophecies of this book; and it is perfectly agreeable to the order observed in the former part of this book; in which the prophecies contained in the Trumpets are supplementary to those of the Seals, and develop a series of cotemporaneous events, connected with the interests of religion and the history of the Christian Church, to the close of the divine dispensations.

But before we proceed to the examination of the succeeding Chapters, it is important to make one remark with regard to the necessity of paying a strict attention to the *order*, in which the events of the Christian Church are detailed in the prophecies of the Apocalypse; because it affords one of the strongest arguments against the application of those prophecies to Imperial Rome, which can only belong, in their just and legitimate application, to that *spiritual* dominion, which was erected on the ruins of its *temporal* power. The conquests of Christianity over Paganism, and the persecutions which it experienced from Heathenism after its first establishment, are the subject of the earlier Chapters of the Apocalypse. The corruptions of religion, the persecutions which it has experienced from its anti-christian foes, and the final triumphs of Christianity over the powers of darkness, occupy the remaining part of this mysterious book. If this distinction had been properly considered, it would have spared much trouble in refuting the arguments, by which Bishop Bossuet and the Romanists have endeavoured to evade the force of these prophecies, by applying them to the persecuting power of Imperial Rome; instead of to that corrupt and persecuting Church, which for so many ages has been the great enemy of true religion and practical godliness in the world. The rise of the Beast, and the appearance of the great anti-christian apostasies, were *posterior* to the conquest of Christianity over Paganism, and the general suppression of those Christian heresies, which followed the overthrow of Paganism. This has been observed with great justice by Vitringa¹:

¹ See the admirable remarks of Vitringa, pp. 513, 14.

and, therefore, it is impossible, that those prophecies can be applied to the *former* period, which, it is evident, both from the order, in which they are found in this book, as well as from the internal evidence of the prophecies themselves, belong to Papal Rome.

The prophecies contained in this portion of the Apocalypse, may be divided into *four* parts:

Part IV. containing a description of the enmity which the Church experienced from Satan from the beginning, and of the rise, progress, and establishment of the great anti-christian power; which is contained in Chaps. xii. xiii.

Part V. containing the history of the struggle of the Church with the Beast, and his final overthrow; which is the subject of Chaps. xiv—xix.

Part VI. containing the history of the state of the Church, triumphant over its anti-christian foes, and the execution of the divine judgment on Gog and Magog; which is the subject of Chap. xx. 1—10.

Part VII. containing the account of the general judgment, and the final accomplishment of all the divine dispensations. Chap. xx. 11.—xxii.

CHAP. IV. PART IV.

THE *first* Part of this division of the prophecy contains, as has been observed, a description of the enmity, which the Church experienced from Satan from the beginning; and of the rise, progress, and establishment of the great anti-christian power: and this may be again divided into two distinct heads; (1) *First*, the prophecy of *the Woman and the Dragon*, in which is described the enmity which

the Church experienced from Satan from the beginning; which is the subject of the *twelfth* chapter; (2) and *Secondly*, the rise, progress, and establishment of the great anti-christian power, which is represented in the visions of the two Beasts; which are the subject of the *thirteenth* chapter.

SECT. I.

The Woman and the Dragon.

CHAP. XII.

“AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman 1
 clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon 2
 her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child 3
 cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And 4
 there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great 5
 red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven 6
 crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part 7
 of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and 8
 the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be 9
 delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 10
 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all 11
 nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up 12
 unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the 13
 wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that
 they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-
 score days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his
 angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought
 and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place
 found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast
 out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which
 deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth,
 and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud
 voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength,
 and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:
 for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused
 them before our God day and night. And they overcame
 him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their
 testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.
 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. 12
 Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the
 devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because
 he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the 13
 dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted

- 14 the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the
- 15 serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried
- 16 away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood
- 17 which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"THE sounding of the seventh Trumpet has now prepared us to expect a figurative exhibition of that great conflict and victory, by which the Christian Church will at length be placed in security from her enemies. To describe this *in all its parts*, and to enable us to understand the conflict, by ascertaining the combatants, the Holy Spirit begins the figurative history from the earliest times of the Church; and past events are represented in the same allegory, which is continued to foretell those which are to come¹." The prophet beholds in his vision "a great *wonder* in heaven;" or rather, perhaps, as Dean Woodhouse has explained it, "a type, a symbol, or figurative representation," as the word *σημεῖον* appears to signify here, and as it is found to signify in other passages of Scripture². The heavenly symbol, which is here exhibited to the prophet, is of "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars;" by which the commentators, with a remarkable uniformity of interpretation, understand *the Church of Christ*, "of pure heavenly origin, and placed upon earth in her infant form,

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 243, 244.

² Matt. xii. 38; xvi. 1—14. Rom. iv. 11. So also Vitranga.

when it pleased God to bless with religion our first parents; and, when they were expelled from Paradise, to support their hopes, and those of their posterity, by the promise of a Redeemer, the offspring of the woman, who should "bruise the serpent's head." "The imagery," Dean Woodhouse observes, "which in this apocalyptic vision is seen to decorate her, is grand and sublime. No earthly material is employed to clothe or adorn her; she is arrayed in pure and heavenly light³. And thus splendid will she again appear, when she has regained her native purity, and is freed from the assaults of her enemies and the corruptions of a sinful world." (Rev. xxi.)⁴ *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* Such was the situation of the Church from the time of Adam, 'the first man,' to whom the seed was promised,—to that of Christ, 'the second man,' the 'promised seed,' 'the Lord from heaven.' The scriptural writers express, under the same imagery, the earnest and unsatisfied desire of the ancient Church to possess this promised blessing⁵. *And there appeared another sign in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.* By the dragon, which is here described, is represented, as the symbol is interpreted in the ninth verse of this chapter, *the old serpent,*

³ Psal. civ. 2.

⁵ Mich. v. 2, 3. Rom. viii. 22.

⁴ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, and Woodhouse.
Vitringa ad locum.

called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He is described with *seven heads*, with crowns upon them, and *ten horns*; by which image is expressed that prodigious degree of worldly power and dominion, which is permitted to him by God¹; and on account of which he is called, in other passages of Scripture, “the Prince of this world,” “the God of this world,” “the Prince of the power of the air².” He is also described as *drawing with his tail the third part of the stars of heaven*; by which is probably represented the apostasy of those wicked spirits, whom he seduced into rebellion against the Almighty; and who are now his instruments, through the agency of wicked teachers and wicked men, in promoting the spiritual ruin and misery of mankind³. This evil spirit is represented as waiting to devour, as soon as it was born, this child, who was the hope of the Church, the Messiah; who is here described as “ruling the nations with a rod of iron;”—the terms in which he was spoken of by the prophet David in the second Psalm, and which are attributed to himself by our Redeemer in this prophecy⁴. The woman, thus persecuted by the dragon, is then described as flying into the wilderness; where she takes refuge for the space of a thousand two hundred and threescore years. Under this image is represented the mournful condition of the Christian Church during that

¹ Matt. iv. 9.

² John xii. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2.

³ This interpretation is adopted by Bishop Bossuet and Dean Woodhouse: and appears preferable to those, which are adopted by Bishop Newton and Vitringa; the former of whom explains

it *exclusively* of those temporal powers, which were the great persecutors of Christianity; the latter, of the corrupt teachers of religion. Vitringa, pp. 524, 5. Newton ad locum.

⁴ Psal. ii. 9. Rev. ii. 27; xix. 15. Comp. Woodhouse ad locum.

period of the great anti-christian apostasies, which is described also under the sixth Trumpet; when, under the influence of the Mahometan and Papal corruptions and persecutions, she was almost banished from the earth. "Religion abode with the Israelites in the wilderness during forty years of miraculous preservation. She fled again to the wilderness with the prophet Elijah, and was there miraculously supported and restored to her own land: (1 Kings xvii. xviii.) Thus the Church of Christ, after the birth of the promised seed, persecuted by the dragon and his agents, flies for refuge to obscure retreats, and is there miraculously preserved during a time appointed⁵;" at the end of which she will again appear in renewed beauty and power.

The prophet then describes the conflict in heaven between Satan and his angels, on the one hand, and, on the other, between Michael and his angels; who, as in ancient times he appeared as the champion and defender of the Church of God under the old dispensation⁶, appears also in this passage, as the great champion and defender of the Church of the Redeemer; an office to which he seems to be especially designated in the closing scene of the prophecy of Daniel; in which the prophet, borne away on the wings of inspiration, proclaims the future glorious destinies of the Church of God⁷. For there appears to be no ground for the supposition, which has been adopted by some commentators, that we are by Michael, in this passage, to understand the Redeemer himself⁸. The beginning of this conflict, as Vitringa has observed, is probably to be attri-

⁵ Woodhouse, *Annot.* ad locum.

⁶ Dan. x. 13, 21; xii. 1.

⁷ Dan. xii. 1.

⁸ Vitringa, p. 537. Vid. Pol. Syn.

buted to a period prior to the flight of the woman into the wilderness; and though it may not¹, as Dean Woodhouse has supposed, be the same with that which led to the original banishment of Satan from heaven, yet it was probably coterminous with the first designs of God for the salvation of the world². The dragon, finding his efforts ineffectual against the Church, which was thus, during the season of affliction and persecution, *nourished* and protected by God³, directs new efforts of persecution and corruption against it⁴. Such were the *floods* and torrents of worldly power⁵, which the great Enemy of mankind directed against the faithful servants of the Redeemer. But still *the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth*: the Christian religion, almost destroyed, was frequently relieved, in a wonderful manner, by *earthly* resources, through the agency of persons, who, like Constantine, were raised up at different periods for the protection of the Church⁶. Yet the great Enemy of mankind, insatiable in his rage, renews his efforts against it; and continues *to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus*.

There is a considerable difference of opinion

¹ Vitrings, p. 529.

² This is the opinion of Mede, who has the following observation on the passage: "*Et factum est, inquit, prælium in cælo, &c., nempe dum pareret Mulier, non postquam peperisset, ut multi accipiunt. Nam certum est ex v. 14 bellum hoc gestum esse ante Mulieris fugam in Eremum. Mulier*

autem in Eremum non fugit, priusquam peperisset, et filius ejus raptus sit ad thronum majestatis, v. 5, 6."

Comment. Apoc. Works. p. 614.

³ Ver. 14.

⁴ Ver. 15.

⁵ Psal. LXXXIX. 9; LXV. 7.

⁶ Compare Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. x. c. 5; and see Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

amongst the commentators, in what way the difficulty is to be explained, which arises from the apparent interposition of the history which is contained in verses 7—12, relative to the conflict between the Archangel Michael and Satan: and this passage is generally considered to be parenthetical. But perhaps the simplest method of explaining the difficulty, is by considering the passage, which is contained between the seventh verse and the end of the chapter, as containing a repetition, with additional circumstances, of the history of the persecution of the woman and her offspring by the dragon; a description of repetition, which, as we have before observed, is characteristic of the prophecies of this book. Considered in this point of view, the latter passage affords a more detailed history of the *motives* which led the dragon to this violent persecution of the woman and her offspring, namely, the consciousness of his own miserable and irreparable fall⁷; of the merciful preservation and protection which was provided for the Church, during this season of persecution and trial; and of which a continuance is promised to it, till the fulfilment of that time, when the mystery of God shall be finished⁸; and the termination of those persecutions, which, it is foretold, shall befall the Church, both previously to and during the period of the great anti-christian apostasies⁹. Vitrunga explains the passage contained in verses 13—16, with reference to the persecutions raised by Satan against the Church, from the time of Constantine to the rise of the anti-christian apostasies, and particularly the trials which it underwent during the

⁷ Ver. 13.⁸ Ver. 14.⁹ Ver. 13, 15—17.

Arian persecution; and he explains the *seventeenth* verse of the persecutions, which it experienced *during* that period, and particularly from the Mahometan apostasy¹. But perhaps this verse may be explained generally of *all* the trials, which the Church endured during this period. With regard to the opinion of Bishop Bossuet, who would refer the persecution, mentioned in this passage, to that which the Church experienced from Maximin, it is evident that it is untenable: because the persecution of Maximin *began* A. D. 311, and *ended* A. D. 313; a period, which will not answer to the terms of the prophecy, even if we understand the 1260 days of *literal days*, instead of *years*². But how affecting and beautiful is the representation, which is here presented to us, of the Church taking refuge in the wilderness from the violence and persecution of men, during that awful period of terror and dismay, when “darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people;” and the faithful servants of the Redeemer, hunted down by persecution, and driven from the society of men, took refuge in the *wilderness* from the violence of the storm³. Like their predecessors of old in faith and in sufferings, “they had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered about in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves

¹ Vitranga, p. 550, comp. with p. 562.

² Comp. Vitranga, p. 552.

³ This was exemplified in the history of the Waldenses, and others.

of the earth¹." How often, amidst the cruelty and violence, with which they were assailed by their unrelenting persecutors, when "fearfulness and trembling came upon them, and an horrible dread overwhelmed them," must these faithful men have taken up the affecting prayer of the Psalmist: "O that I had wings like a dove: for then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo, then would I get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would make haste to escape, because of the stormy wind and tempest²." But still, like the Israelites of old, their Almighty protector "bare them on eagles' wings, and brought them unto himself³;" and preserved them in safety, until the dawn of a brighter day.

Such appears to be the general purport of this prophecy. But it will be proper to notice the opinions of some other commentators, who have maintained sentiments at variance with this exposition of the prophecy. Such is the opinion of Mede and his followers, who have explained it of the Pagan persecuting power of *Imperial Rome*⁴. This learned commentator further explains the child who is here mentioned, to be what he calls the *mystic Christ*, the son of the Church, for whom the Roman dragon laid wait that he might destroy him from the very moment of his birth⁵; and he explains the circumstance of "the child being caught up to heaven, to

¹ Hebr. xi. 36—38.

² Psal. l.v. 1—8.

³ Exod. xix. 4. Comp. Isai. xl. 31; l.xiii. 9, &c.

⁴ This is the opinion of Vitringa: "Dicendum," he observes, "Dracōnem hic notare Diabolum, qualem se exhiberet in Romano Imperio." P. 527.

⁵ Mede, *Comment. Apoc. Works*, p. 613. "Nempe ut Pharaō Israeli veteri in Ægypto nascenti, utque deinde Herodes Christo Mariæ, Domino nostro; ita DRACO Romanus Christo mystico, quem Ecclesia pariturus erat, insidiatus est, ut eum statim a partu opprimeret."

God and his throne," of the elevation of Christianity to the throne of the Roman Empire, upon the public recognition of Christianity by Constantine¹: and such, on the whole, is the opinion of Bishop Newton; who however thinks, that "Constantine was here particularly intended, for whose life the dragon Galerius laid many snares, but he providentially escaped them all, was caught up to the throne of God, and was not only secured by the divine protection, but was advanced to the Imperial throne, called the throne of God; for "there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God²." Vitranga explains it of the divine protection, which was vouchsafed to all the Roman Emperors who embraced Christianity, but especially to Constantine³; though he justly objects to the application of the appellation, "the throne of God," to the seat of the Roman Empire, which had been, and was for many ages after the time of Constantine, *the throne of the dragon*⁴. Mede further explains the type of the woman dwelling in the wilderness, of the freedom of the Church from Heathen tyranny, till the time of the seventh Trumpet and the second advent of Christ: and he says, that by the eagle we are to understand the Roman Empire; and by the *two wings* of the eagle, the respective heads of the Eastern and Western Empires⁵.

These, and other opinions connected with the interpretation of this prophecy, may be seen, by consulting the commentaries of Vitranga and Bishop

¹ Mede, ib.

² Bishop Newton ad locum.

³ Pp. 527—529.

⁴ "*Solum Romanum*, absolute sic

dictum, non est *solum Dei*. Potest enim esse, et fuerat per longa sæcula, *thronus Draconis*." Ib. p. 527.

⁵ *Works*, pp. 617, 618.

Newton. They have been examined with great learning and ability by Dean Woodhouse, who has shewn, that the dragon is expressly declared, in the ninth verse of this chapter, to be "that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world;" "to which description," as he justly observes, "no *Roman Emperor*, nor succession of Emperors, can answer. The same dragon appears again in chap. xx. 2, and (as it were to prevent mistake) he is there described in *the very same words*. But this re-appearance of the same dragon is in a very late period of the Apocalyptic history; long *after* the expiration of the 1260 days, or years; and even *after* the wild beast and false prophet (who derive their power from the dragon during this period) are come to their end⁶. And the *dragon* is upon the scene long after these times, and continues in action at the end of *another* long period, a period of a *thousand years*⁷. He there pursues his ancient artifices, 'deceiving the nations,' even till his final catastrophe, in chap. xx. 10, when the warfare of the Church is finished⁸." It is evident, therefore, that by the dragon we can understand the Devil *alone*; who, from the period of his own fall, has been the continual enemy of God and godliness, the tempter, the persecutor, and destroyer of the Church, and of the children of God. The only appearances, which seem to favour the application of this symbol to Imperial Rome, are the seven crowned heads and ten horns of the dragon: and, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "in a particular sense, the seven heads and ten horns of the latter Roman Empire are fitly attributed to Satan, because

⁶ Chap. xix. 20.⁷ Chap. xx. 7.⁸ Dean Woodhouse, pp. 324, 5.

during the period of 1260 years, and perhaps beyond it, he makes use of the Roman Empire, its capital city, and ten kings or kingdoms, as the instruments of his successful attack on the Christian Church¹. "But still," as the same learned writer has observed, "the number *seven* is expressive of great universality; and although the seven heads, or seven mountains, are in another prophecy applied to Rome, in a particular sense, which may probably designate that city; yet they have a much more extended and general signification, expressive of the immense influence of Satan in the councils of this world. Joseph Mede, when he had no favourite hypothesis immediately in view, clearly saw and acknowledged the force of this symbol; and, in one of his learned sermons, has justly described the parties engaged in this spiritual conflict: (1) Satan, and his angels; (2) The woman and her seed²." Such also is the opinion of the Venerable Bede, who describes the dragon to be "*Diabolus, potentia terreni regni armatus,*" *the devil armed with the power of worldly dominion*³. The worldly agents, whom he employs to carry on his warfare against the Church, are described in the following chapter: and these are, *first, the Beast from the sea; and, secondly, the Two-horned Beast, or the Beast from the land.*

¹ This appears also to be the opinion of Vitringa. See pp. 520—3.

² Woodhouse, *Annot.* pp. 524, 5.

³ Bede, *Comment.* in loc.

PART IV. SECT. II.

1. *The Beast from the Sea.*

CHAP. XIII. 1—10.

“AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast 1
 rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns,
 and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name
 (Gr. *ὀνόματα* names⁴) of blasphemy. And the beast which 2
 I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet
 of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the
 dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.
 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; 3
 and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world won-
 dered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which 4
 gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast,
 saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war
 with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speak- 5
 ing great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto
 him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his 6
 mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name,
 and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it 7
 was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to over-
 come them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and 8
 tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall
 worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life
 of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any 9
 man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity 10
 shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must
 be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith
 of the saints.”

2. *The Two-horned Beast, or The Beast from the Land.*

XIII. 11—18.

“AND I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; 11
 and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.
 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, 12
 and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship
 the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth 13
 great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven

⁴ So also marg. Compare also *βλασφημίας, full of names of blas-
 chap. xvii. 3. where the same beast phemy.*
 is described as being *γέμον ὀνομάτων*

- 14 on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.
- 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be
- 16 killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the
- 18 number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."

It is justly remarked by Vitranga, that the prophecy relative to the two *Beasts*, the one rising out of the *land*, the other out of the *sea*, is the *key* of the mysteries of the Apocalypse¹. For it is through the medium of the agency of these Beasts, that Satan directs his last and most fatal efforts against the Church. The circumstances relative to the rise, the dominion, the signs, and the final destruction of the Beast, which is directed by the *Whore*, occupy a considerable portion of the chapters of this book. The condition and the corruptions of Christianity, which led to the rise and final establishment of this great anti-christian power; the fatal influence which it exercised during the period of its sway, not only over the spiritual interests and the purity of the Christian Church, but over the *temporal* interests of mankind; and the great and glorious destinies to the Christian Church, which, it is foretold will follow its final destruction and overthrow; all conspire to make it a subject of the deepest interest to every Christian, who feels that his own

¹ Vitranga, p. 569.

salvation is materially connected with the purity of his faith; and to whom the present prospects and the future triumphs of religion constitute a continual, and at the same time a delightful subject of contemplation and thought. Let us proceed, therefore, farther, to trace the rise and progress of this great anti-christian power, according to the order and the degree of clearness, with which it is manifested in the prophecies of this book.

The prophet describes himself in his vision as standing on the shore, and beholding a beast *rising* out of the *sea*. The conflict had been removed from the *earth* and the *sea*, where the angel had begun to disclose the fortunes of the Church in the western kingdoms of the Gentiles, to heaven, where we have seen the two great combatants engaged on either side, Michael the archangel, and Satan; the one in defence of, the other in embittered hostility against the Church; thereby declaring both the origin of the evil, as well as the nature of the warfare, which, through the medium of his worldly agents, is directed by Satan against it². Now by the terms, the *land* and the *sea*, as they are used in a former part of this prophecy³, under the first and second Trumpets, we have seen that we are probably to understand respectively *the Holy Land, the people of Israel*, so long as they continued the people of God; and *the isles, or nations of the Gentiles*⁴. "The ascent of the wild beast from the *sea*," therefore, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "seems to signify his rise in *worldly* power, and probably also from the western Gentiles, who are designated under this sym-

² Compare Woodhouse ad locum.

³ Chap. viii. 7, 8.

⁴ Compare chap. viii. 7, 8; and see Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

bol¹." But as there is a striking conformity, which has been remarked by all the commentators, between this vision and that of the four beasts in the prophet Daniel; it will lead to a more accurate understanding of the true purport of these visions, if we institute a comparison between the vision of Daniel and that of the Apocalypse. (1) The four wild beasts of the prophet Daniel, which are expressly interpreted by the Holy Spirit to mean "four kings which should arise out of the earth," are described by him "as coming up out of the *sea*²:" and this constitutes the first, and one of the most important features of resemblance between the two visions. (2) Another important feature of resemblance between them, is, that the Beast of the Apocalypse possesses in combination all the different properties of the four beasts of Daniel. "The three first beasts of Daniel resemble those, which appear to have been most formidable to the ancient world, the lion, the bear, and the leopard, and which are enumerated as such by Hosea³; but the fourth beast is a non-descript. He was *diverse* from the other beasts; exceedingly terrible; had iron teeth, and ten horns; and, among the horns, one more dreadful than the rest, which sprung up after them. But the beast of the Apocalypse is described as possessing the most terrible parts and properties of *all* the beasts of Daniel. He is in his general shape like a leopard, uniting uncommon agility with ferocious strength; he has the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear. But his resemblance is much nearer to the fourth beast, whose more dreadful power he seems to possess. (3) He has his ten horns, his ten kings,

¹ Woodhouse ad locum.

² Dan. vii. 2—17.

³ Hosea xiii. 7, 8.

or kingdoms. (4) He has 'the mouth speaking great things and blasphemies,' which is seen upon the little additional horn of the fourth beast of Daniel⁴." In these words is signified their anti-christian and idolatrous character⁵, and this constitutes the fourth point of resemblance between them. (5) Another point of resemblance between them consists in *their persecuting character*. As the little horn in Daniel, *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; so it was given unto the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations*. (6) The next point of resemblance between them consists in *the duration of their power*. As the saints were to be *given into the hand* of the little horn *until a time, and times, and the dividing of time*, during which period he should *practice and prosper* against them, so, in like manner, it is foretold with respect to the beast of the Apocalypse, that *power should be given to him to practice forty and two months, or one thousand two hundred and threescore days*. For this period of time is designated by both these expressions; as it is evident from comparing these corresponding passages of Daniel and the Apocalypse, with the *second* and *third* verses of the *eleventh* chapter, and with the *sixth* and *fourteenth* verses of the *twelfth* chapter of this book; in the two last of which passages we find the period, during which the woman shall be nourished in the wilderness from the face of the serpent, designated by *both* these expressions. (7) The *last* point of resemblance between these two visions, relates to the *time* at which the principal

⁴ Woodhouse.

⁵ Mede, *Comment. Apoc.* pp. 625—627.

power, which is represented as belonging to the Beasts in both visions, was to be called into existence. It was not till after the rise of the little horn, that the fourth beast of Daniel began to exercise his greatest tyranny against the saints of the Most High: and, in like manner, it was not till "one of his heads was wounded to death," and "this deadly wound was healed," that the Beast of the Apocalypse "began to make war with the saints."

There is also the same degree of resemblance between the Beasts in both visions, in the nature and exercise of their power. The *little horn* in the vision of Daniel, is represented as "making war with the saints and prevailing against them;" and the *spiritual* character of this tyranny is evidently pointed out by the means and character of its overthrow, which is, by "judgment being given to the saints of the Most High, and the saints possessing the kingdom¹." And, in like manner, the *spiritual* character of the tyranny, which is exercised by the Beast of the Apocalypse, is plainly expressed in the character which is given of it by St John,—“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blasphemise his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” It is proved also by the *character* of the persons who, amidst the universally extended dominion of the Beast, are induced to worship him, namely, “those *whose names are not written in the book of life* of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,”—a mode of expression,

¹ Dan. vii. 22—27.

which clearly points out the *spiritual* character both of the worship which is offered to the Beast, and of the tyranny which is exercised by him over the saints. Such, therefore, are the striking features of resemblance between these two visions of Daniel and St John; and the peculiar characteristics which may lead us to the true purport of the prophecies contained in them.

“Commentators of all ages,” as Dean Woodhouse has observed, “have looked more or less to the Roman Empire for the fulfilment of this prophecy; and the principal question of debate has been, whether it is to be found in the power abused under the heathen Emperors, or under that afterwards usurped and equally abused by Christian, or, to speak more truly, Anti-Christian Rome².” Grotius, and Hammond who adopted his opinions, have looked for the fulfilment of the prophecy which is contained in this vision, in Imperial Rome. These writers consider the Beast to be a symbol of the idolatrous persecuting power of Imperial Rome under the Emperor Domitian; they explain the *seven horns* with reference to the *seven Emperors*, who preceded Domitian, namely, Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian and Titus; and they consider “the head which was as it were wounded to death,” to be emblematical of the capitol, which was built on one of the hills of Rome, and was destroyed in the civil war which arose between the Vitellian and Flavian factions³. Bishop Bossuet, aware of the difficulties and inconsistencies, which attend this

² Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 271.

³ See the statement which is given of the opinions of Grotius by Vitringa,

and his own valuable remarks on them, pp. 571—574; and compare Hammond, *Annotations ad locum*.

exposition of the meaning of the vision, applies it to Diocletian, and to his much longer and severer persecution. He explains the *seven heads* to mean Diocletian and the six Emperors, who immediately succeeded him, Maximian, Constantius, Galerius, Maxentius, Maximin and Licinius; he considers the head, which was smitten to death, to represent Maximin, upon whose death idolatry seemed to have received a deadly blow, and the power of the beast to be effectually destroyed; which however, to the astonishment of all men, revived on the accession of Julian to the throne. It would be impossible, and indeed it is unnecessary, to enter more at length into the examination of the different systems of interpretation, which have been adopted by these learned writers; because they may be seen in their respective Commentaries, and are also stated at length by Vitringa¹. We may be allowed, however, to make one remark,—that the views which have been taken by these learned writers of the object and intent of this prophecy, do not appear to harmonize—either with the obvious scope and meaning of that prophecy of Daniel, with which it is so intimately connected, and which evidently has in view events connected with the interests of religion, of far greater interest and importance than any which arose out of the persecutions of Domitian and Diocletian; or with what we have hitherto seen to be the obvious scope and object of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; or, lastly, with the terms, in which the vision itself is described. With regard to the opinion of Grotius, we may remark, that it is incredible, that the Holy Spirit would devote so

¹ See Bossuet's notes on this chapter; and Vitringa, pp. 574, 5.

large a portion of this prophecy to the delineation of the persecution of Domitian, and of the triumph of Christianity over it,—a persecution, which, so far from lasting even *forty-two months*, did not last more than a year and a half². And with regard to the opinion of Bossuet, Vitringa observes, that the prophecies relating to the rise, the kingdom, and the destruction of the Beast, constitute the *key* to the prophecies of the Apocalypse. But in what way is the consistency of its character preserved, if we apply this chapter, which constitutes so important a feature in this part of the prophecy, to the persecution of Diocletian? In what way does the history of the rise and progress of this tremendous evil to the Christian Church answer to the causes, which led to the persecution of Diocletian³? or how can any benefits, which accrued to Christianity by the overthrow of the persecuting power of Pagan Rome, be considered as supplying an adequate fulfilment of the triumphs of Christianity over its enemies, which are the subject of the following chapter? A due consideration of these opinions is, however, necessary to enable us to form just views on this important subject; and that we may estimate fairly the conformity of our own opinions with a true idea of the prophetic character of the Apocalypse, considered as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy, from its first and earliest revelation to the final close of the divine dispensations. As Bishop Newton has justly observed, the terms themselves of the vision lead us to look for its accomplishment in some *future* condition of the Roman Empire. “St John saw this beast *rising* out of

² See Vitringa, pp. 573, 4.

³ Ib. pp. 574, &c.

the sea: but the Roman Empire was risen and established long before John's time; and therefore this must be the Roman Empire, not in its present, but in some future shape and form; and it arose in another shape and form, after it was broken to pieces by the incursion of the northern nations." It was after this period, that that anti-christian dominion was established at Rome, which exercised a tyranny over the nations of the world, far more arbitrary and more dreadful, than was ever exercised by Pagan Rome in the days of its greatest power; a tyranny, of which the dreadful effects upon the Church of God were so deeply and so extensively felt for several ages, and which, in the present day, though it is materially weakened, is not destroyed. This view of this great Christian apostasy,—thus deriving its existence, its character, and the odious exercise of its tyrannical power from Satan himself, is the only view, which entirely answers to the terms, in which its rise and its existence are described, and to the station which it occupies in the scheme of revelation; in which it is pointed out as the most dreadful trial and calamity,—far exceeding any *temporal* calamity,—which, in the accomplishment of the divine dispensations, is destined to befall the Church and people of the Most High.

The importance, which has been attached to this vision, is fully borne out by the solemn admonition which accompanies its close. When our blessed Saviour wished to direct particular attention to his discourses, he was accustomed to add: "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear:*" and the admonition is renewed, when he sends his messages

to the seven churches of Asia by his beloved Apostle and Prophet St John: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." In the same manner, at the close of this vision, the Prophet concludes it with an invitation to serious attention; and he accompanies his exhortation to *faith and patience* with an assurance of deliverance and final triumph. "If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

2. *The Beast from the Earth or Land.*

There is greater difficulty in the interpretation of this Vision, than there was in that of the preceding. Another wild beast (for he is of the same description with the former) appears before St John; but with this difference, that he appears rising out of the *earth* or *land*, instead of the *sea*; and he bears upon his head two horns, like the horns of a lamb; but his speech is dragon-like. He unites with the first beast, and exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and makes the earth or land and its inhabitants to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound had been healed. This he effects by pretended miracles, which he professes to perform in the presence of the first beast. But the weak in faith are beguiled by these pretended miracles; and at the command of the second beast, they make a statue or image in honour of the first beast. And to this statue it is permitted to give

breath or life; that it should utter decrees, and cause those, who refuse to worship it, to be slain. Persons of all stations, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, are compelled to receive the mark of the beast; and those who refuse to receive it, are interdicted from the privilege of buying and selling, and from all the ordinary rights and comforts of society. Persons of wisdom and understanding are desired to calculate the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, six hundred threescore and six¹.

The following are the opinions, which have been maintained by some of the most eminent commentators, with regard to the purport of this vision.

1. The ancient interpreters, Andreas Cæsariensis, Arethas, and Primasius, as might be expected, have made but few attempts to explain the purport of this vision. Their ideas respecting it are consequently very general; they look only to the coming of an *anti-christ* at some future period, and a renewal of the Roman persecutions under him. The mention of the opinions of these writers is important only in this point of view,—that they confirm, what has been before stated with respect to these writers, with reference to the views, which were maintained by them, of the spiritual purport and character of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

2. Grotius, who in this opinion is followed by Hammond, explains the vision of the attempts, which were made, by the means of magical arts and sorceries, to oppose the progress of Christianity, and to prop up the falling fabric of Paganism: and he supposes *the beast* to represent Apollonius Tyanæus, one of

¹ See Dean Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 278, 9.

these magical impostors, who lived in the reign of Domitian: and Hammond extends it to all the followers of Apollonius, who adopted the same mode of opposing the Gospel. Bishop Bossuet, in conformity with his interpretation of the former vision, affixes the same interpretation to the vision, but applies it to the time of Diocletian. The opinions, however, of these learned writers have obtained but little countenance from expositors of the Apocalypse.

3. Protestant commentators in general have been of opinion, that the prophetic description of the second wild beast is applicable exclusively to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Mede explains the *two horns* of the power of *binding* and *loosing*, so extravagantly and unscripturally assumed by the Pope and his Clergy. Vitringa supposes them to represent the power which was given to the Franciscans and Dominicans by the establishment of the Inquisition. Bishop Newton thinks them to be fulfilled in the two bodies of the Romish Clergy, the regular and the secular. These opinions will, however, be probably thought to be *all* of them liable to the same objection; that the different powers, which are supposed to be represented by the two horns, are not of sufficient importance to justify the prominent manner, in which they are introduced in this vision.

4. Daubuz and others have supposed the symbol of the two horns to have been exemplified in the contests for power and supremacy, which existed for so long a period between the Bishops of Rome and the Patriarchs of Constantinople; and which, in the instance of the latter pontiffs, at length was carried to such extremes, that, about the year 588, John,

Patriarch of Constantinople, assumed to himself the title of Universal Bishop: upon which Pope Gregory the Great proceeded against him so far as to declare, that "whosoever calleth himself Universal Bishop, or desireth so to be called, in the pride of his heart, doth forerun anti-christ!" It is, however, evident that however plausible this opinion may at first sight appear,—and it must be admitted that the rival contests between these Prelates for power and superiority, appear in many striking particulars to fulfil the purport of the vision,—yet that they fail in one important particular, namely, *in their duration*. These disputes began in the times of Constantine, in the fourth century, and ceased in the seventh, when the Patriarch of Constantinople was compelled to submit to the power of the Roman Pontiff: and this was exactly the period, when the power of the Roman See was rising to its greatest height; whilst, at the same time, the Greek church itself was torn by intestine divisions², and the whole power of the eastern world, amongst other causes of decay, was sinking under the oppressive power of the victorious arms of Mahomet.

5. The various difficulties, which, in a greater or less degree, belong to all these different opinions, have tended to confirm Dean Woodhouse in the opinion, which he took up at the time he was studying this book without the aid of commentators, that by the *two horns* we are to understand those two great anti-christian apostasies, the Mahometan and the Papal, which during the seventh century, rose almost simultaneously into power; and nearly di-

¹ See Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Diss. xxii.

² See Mosheim, *Eccl. Hist.* Cent. vii. Chap. v.

vided between them the habitable world. Now by the *land*, as it is used in contra-distinction to the *sea* in this prophecy, we are probably, as has been before observed, to understand *the holy land*, the people of God, while the Gentiles are spoken of under the term *sea*. "Thus," as Dean Woodhouse observes, "this second beast appears to arise from among the professed Christians, who, after the rejection of the Jews, have been adopted into their place, and obtained their privileges, (Rom. xi. 18, 19.)" Now let us observe the singular coincidence between the rise of the Mahometan and the Papal power. "Just at the time, when" the authority and influence of the eastern Prelate, "this apparent horn in the eastern division of Christianity, began to fail, and no longer to fulfil the prophecy, another was seen to spring up suddenly in the same quarter, and completely to occupy the vacant place. The religion of Mahomet, founding its pretensions on the Old and New Testaments, armed with ecclesiastical and secular power, began to apostatize and subdue the east. This seems to be the true eastern horn; for it is probable that we are to date the rise of this, and likewise the western or Papal horn, from the same era; because neither of the rival Prelates had before this time arrived at that height of successful ambition, which is displayed by the symbols of the beasts in the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse. But both of them had well earned the name and title, which they had previously attributed to each other, 'a *precursor* of anti-christ;' and this mutual charge by the two great rulers of the Christian Church, seems to amount nearly to a confession, or at least, an authorized de-

claration, that anti-christ was to be expected, where history has since placed him, in the apostate Christian Church¹." Indeed the anti-christian character of the Mahometan apostasy, both in its origin and its doctrines, is sufficiently evident: and though Mahomet did not actually pretend to the power of *working* miracles; yet it was by an appeal to something like miraculous interposition that he sought to establish his religion. "His Koran was a pretended miracle, 'a lying wonder.' He describes himself ascending to heaven, to receive a part of it, and the remainder to be brought to him by angels; and he asserts his Koran to be a divine composition, a work inimitable by man, and he appeals to the world for its vindication as such." "What are these," as Dean Woodhouse justly observes, "but lying wonders," pretended fire from heaven, to delude and seduce the inhabitants of the earth²? Moreover, if, as is probable, by THE IMAGE we are to understand that spiritual tyranny, which was established by the Beast, and to which, by the aid of secular power and lying miracles, he contrived to gain the veneration of mankind,—this part of the vision is equally applicable to the Mahometan and Papal apostasies *united*, that it is to the Papal apostasy alone.

These are some of the arguments, by means of which this learned writer has supported his hypothesis. In order that the weight, which is due to his arguments, may be fairly estimated, they ought to be examined, as they are stated at length in his own valuable works. It would be in perfect conformity with the character of this dreadful apostasy, and with our ideas of its importance as a subject

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 288, 9.

² *Ib.* p. 296.

of prophecy, when we consider its desolating effects on the Christian world,—as well as agreeable to the mode and structure of the prophecies of the Apocalypse,—to believe that the Mahometan apostasy, which was the subject of a former prophecy, would be made the subject of a future revelation; and more particularly in that view of it, in which it is here brought more prominently forward, as a corruption of Christian truth. The application of the second Beast to Mahomet, appears to harmonize very well with the manner in which the Mahometan apostasy is introduced in the sixth Trumpet in union with the Papal apostasy; and particularly with the manner in which it is introduced in this place. That it should be introduced again as the subject of a separate prophecy, is in perfect conformity with the prominent manner, in which it is brought forward afterwards; in the first place (in chap. xvi. 12.), when, upon the pouring out of the sixth vial upon the river Euphrates, the water thereof is dried up, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared; which evidently alludes to the destruction of the Mahometan power; and, secondly, (in chap. xix. 20,) where the destruction of the false prophet with the Beast is expressly described. The difficulty attending the application of the second Beast to Mahomet, consists in ascertaining how, on the hypothesis of Dean Woodhouse, we can explain the twelfth verse, in which he is said to “exercise all the power of the first beast before him, and to cause the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” The question is one of great difficulty, and deserves a modest and patient investigation.

6. There is another exposition of this vision, which is offered with great diffidence, amidst the various opinions of so many learned men; and this is, whether the two horns of the second beast may not be supposed to represent the *secular* and *spiritual* tyranny of the Papal power. Nor can any valid objection be urged against supposing *one* horn to be emblematical of a *temporal* power: because it was a *temporal* power, which professed to found its claims on a *spiritual* supremacy. But we may reconcile ourselves to the difficulties attending the interpretation of this vision,—by considering, that it involves a prophecy, which is yet unfulfilled. How various are the expositions which have been given of the Image, which the two-horned beast compels those, who live on the earth, to make to the first beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live! Who has been able to calculate the number of the Beast? Yet the explanation of these, and other things connected with the description of the second beast, is absolutely necessary to the perfect understanding of this prophecy: nor can we expect, that we shall be able fully to understand these things, until the time is expired, during which it will be permitted to the Dragon, through the agency of his instruments, who are described in this chapter, to carry on his designs against the Church and people of God.

This being the last time that the mention of this period of time,—which is denoted by the expressions *forty-two months* (xi. 2. xiii. 5.), *1260 days*, (xi. 3. xii. 6.) and *a time, and times, and half a time*, (xii. 14.)—occurs in the Apocalypse, and always in intimate connection with the present subject; it

affords a favourable opportunity for inquiring into the meaning of an expression, which involves not only the true interpretation of this particular prophecy, but of the general scheme of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

The period of *forty-two months* is fixed for the treading under foot of the holy city by the Gentiles (xi. 2.), and for the duration of the power which is given to the ten-horned beast, (xiii. 5.); the witnesses are to prophesy in sackcloth during the period of 1260 days, (xi. 3.); and the same period is fixed for the sojourning of the woman in the wilderness, (xii. 6.); which period of time is also denoted by the expression, *a time, and times, and half a time*, (xii. 14.) It is evident, therefore, that all these expressions are synonymous.

Now the expression, *time, and times, and dividing of time*, or the synonymous expression¹, *time, and times, and an half*, occurs twice in the book of Daniel. It is found in chap. vii. 25, as denoting the period during which the *saints are to be given into the power of the little horn*; and in chap. xii. 7, as denoting the period, at which God shall have *accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people*. The expressions *forty-two months*, and *1260 days*, do not occur in the book of Daniel: but the synonymous expressions *time, and times, and dividing*

¹ The words in the original in Dan. vii. 25. are עֶרְוָה וְעֶרְוָה וְעֶרְוָה; and chap. xii. 7. לְשָׁמַר וְלְשָׁמַר וְלְשָׁמַר; the former chapter being written in Chaldee, the latter in Hebrew. That the words עֶרְוָה and לְשָׁמַר are synonymous, and signify *an half*, (as the former word is translated Dan. xii. 7.) comp. Exod.

xxiv. 6. xxv. 10. 17—23; 1 Kings xvi. 21. &c. with the Chaldee Paraphrase Gen. xv. 10; Exod. xxv. 10. 17—23; Josh. viii. 33, &c. The LXX. are also equally conclusive with regard to the meaning of the words: ἕως καιροῦ καὶ καιρῶν, καὶ γε ἡμῖν καιροῦ. Compare also Dan. xii. 7.

of time, and 1260 *days*, which are assigned by the Apostle, chap. xii. 6—14, for the period of the sojourning of the woman in the wilderness, clearly fix the meaning of the expression *time*, *and times*, *and dividing of time*, in the book of Daniel; and prove it to be the same with the 1260 *days*, and the *forty-two months*, of the Apocalypse. Thus, as in many other instances, the later prophecy illustrates and clears up the earlier and more obscure. But we fortunately are not without a guide even in the prophecies of Daniel. We have (chap. viii. 14.) mention made of the period of 2300 *days*, during which *the sanctuary shall be trodden under foot*. We have (chap. ix. 24.) the period of *seventy weeks*, appointed till the death of the Messiah; by which we know that we are to understand *weeks of years*, or 490 *years*. We have again (chap. xii. 11.) the period of 1290 *days* fixed for the accomplishment of the promises of God relative to this Church, *from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up*: and we have in the following verse a period of 1335 *days* mentioned, and a blessing pronounced on him *that waiteth and cometh to the end of the 1335 days*. Now, whatever difficulty there may be in fixing the precise meaning of these expressions, or in defining the precise nature of the events to which they relate, it is evident that they relate to *very distant* periods of the Church, in which the designs of God will be fully accomplished. For with regard to those persons, who would apply them to the period of Antiochus, Bishop Newton has shewn that they are altogether inapplicable to that period; the persecution of Antiochus not having lasted for a time cor-

responding to any of the periods above-mentioned. With regard to the vision in the *eighth* chapter, Daniel is commanded (verse 26) to “shut it up; *because it shall be for many days:*” and also in the *twelfth* chapter, the same admonition is repeated, *Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end* (ver. 9.): till which period the prophet is commanded to *shut up his words, and seal the book; for many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;—even the end, till which Daniel was to rest, and then stand in his lot at the end of the days.* (xii. 4—13.) And the whole chapter has reference to a very distant period, extending even to the day of judgment, during which great afflictions will befall the Church, and “*many shall be purified and made white and tried.*” And with regard to the vision in the *seventh* chapter, which, as we have seen, is so closely connected with the vision of the ten-horned beast in this chapter of the Apocalypse, and which describes *the saints as being given into the hands of the little horn until a time, and times, and dividing of time,*—it is expressly said that *the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end: and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the Most High.* But this part of the vision yet remains to be fulfilled; the kingdom has *not* yet been given to the saints of the Most High; and therefore the *time, and times, and dividing of time,* must have reference to some distant period, such as that of the *1260 years*; which we have ascertained from a comparison of the expression in this chapter with

the corresponding expressions in the Apocalypse, to be the same period of time with that which is spoken of by the prophet Daniel, under the description of *a time, and times, and dividing of time*. Indeed, as if to mark the fact, that the *days* and *weeks* of Daniel are not to be understood in their ordinary acceptation, when they are used to denote a prophetical period,—we may observe, that in one passage, Daniel, when he wished to express the common division of time, uses the expression *weeks of days*¹.

If such, therefore, be the obvious meaning of the terms *weeks* and *days* in the prophetical periods of Daniel, those persons,—who would adopt a different mode of computation with regard to the same expressions in the prophecies of the Apocalypse; (which, with reference to that period of the Christian Church which is comprehended under the 1260 days, are so intimately connected with those of Daniel;) and would understand them of *natural days*,—must explain, with what consistency we can deviate from the obvious meaning of the expression, as it is established by its usage in the more ancient prophecy. But it is important to remark, that it is impossible to reconcile the important events, which are the subject of this part of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, with any other mode of calculation, than that which is established by the prophecies of Daniel. The subject of these chapters, from the *thirteenth* verse of the *ninth* chapter to the end of the *thirteenth* chapter, is the depression of the Christian Church during the reign of the Mahometan and Papal apos-

¹ Dan. x. 2, 3. The expression used in the authorized Version is "three full weeks:" but the literal translation of the Hebrews is *weeks of days*. In

chap. ix. 24, in speaking of a prophetical period, it is simply *weeks*. See the note in p. 167, and compare Lev. xxv. 8.

tacies. The religion of Mahomet is still triumphant over a large portion of the earth; "the holy city is still trodden down by the Gentiles;" the witnesses *still* continue to prophesy in sackcloth; there is no evidence at present of that triumphant revolution in religion, which is typified in their resurrection and ascension into heaven; and there is no evidence of the destruction of the enemies of the Church, such as is represented by the falling of the city; the Church is still in the wilderness; the power of the Beast, though weakened, is not destroyed. The Trumpet of the seventh angel has not yet sounded; the kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. The internal evidence, therefore, of the prophecy itself bears testimony to the conclusion, which we derive from the examination of the prophecies of Daniel, that the prophetic *days*, which are here mentioned, are to be considered as *years*; and that the termination of them belongs to a period, which yet remains to be fulfilled. And this conclusion is confirmed by the subjects of the following chapter, which exhibits to us the triumphant rejoicings of the redeemed on the judgment of the enemies of Christ,—the overthrow of the spiritual Babylon,—the general preaching of the Gospel,—and the execution of the Almighty vengeance on the enemies of the truth,—events, which even to us, who are living towards the close of the 1260 years, still appear to be distant.

With regard to the time at which the events, connected with the different Apocalyptic periods, had their commencement, and at which they will be brought to their close, Dean Woodhouse is of opinion, that Mede has not been successful in his

endeavours to synchronize all these periods. He justly observes, that "commentators seem to have been too adventurous in fixing the exact commencement of these periods, which appear to be involved in a purposed obscurity, which *the event* only can clear. But it may be probable, that the twelve hundred and sixty years of the Gentiles, of the woman in the wilderness, and of the witnesses, will come to their conclusion, before the anti-christian reign of the Beast is seen finally to close. And this is all that he dare advance concerning prophecies which are fulfilling, and are to be fulfilled¹." Different periods are assigned by different prophets to the commencement of the Babylonish captivity; yet, in the point of its duration, they all of them agree: and with regard to the prophecy of the *seventy weeks*, of the fulfilment of which none but infidels have ever presumed to doubt, learned men have not been able to agree with regard to the exact period, either of its commencement or its close². Can we be surprised then, that we should not be able to fix the exact time either of the commencement or the close of those great Apocalyptic periods, which involve some of the greatest changes and revolutions in the Christian Church; and of which, though we see enough in the present state of the world to believe

¹ Woodhouse, *Annot.* pp. 276, 277.

² Petavius, Archbishop Usher, and Bishop Lloyd, date the commencement of this period from the *twentieth* year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, and this date is adopted in the margin of our Bibles; though, it should be observed, Bishop Lloyd differs from the two former, in the manner in which he proposes to reconcile the different periods mentioned in this prophecy. Sir Isaac

Newton, Dr Prideaux, and others, date the commencement from the *seventh* year of Artaxerxes, from which period there are 490 years to the death of Christ. A review of the different opinions connected with this prophecy, may be seen in the Commentaries of W. Lowth and Wintle *ad locum*; in Prideaux, *Connect. of Script.* Part I. Book v. *ad ann. ante Chr.* 458; and in Bishop Chandler, *Def. Chr.* Chap. II.

that they are hastening to their accomplishment, the certainty can be established by the event alone?

Indeed with regard to the time, from which we ought probably to date the commencement of the period of 1260 years, some respectable writers have endeavoured to fix it to the year 533, at which period an epistle from the Emperor Justinian to Pope John the First is appealed to, together with an edict of the same character, to prove, that the Emperor did then concede the supreme ecclesiastical authority to the Papal see. This hypothesis would bring the close of the 1260 years to the year 1792. But as the fact itself rests on doubtful authority, so also is there no evidence, in the present state of the world, of the commencement of that happy state of things, which we are led to believe will follow the close of this period. Dean Woodhouse, in his first work, on the authority of Archbishop Usher and Dean Prideaux, fixed upon the year 606 for the date of the rise of the two horns; when the impostor Mahomet retired to his cave to broach his superstition in the east, and in the west Pope Boniface the Third received the title of universal Bishop from the tyrant Phocas. In his later work, however, he receded from this opinion; conceiving that the fact itself did not rest on sufficient authority, and that the progress of the Papal power was slow, steady, and gradual for many centuries, without exhibiting any well-authenticated particular event, promotive of it in such a degree, as to establish it as the era from which this prophetical period had its beginning³. These considerations may, perhaps, serve to

³ See the valuable note of Dean Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 289—291, also *Ib.* pp. 364, 5.

convince us of the truth of the conclusion, which we derived from the former arguments, that the exact time, from which we are to date the commencement of this period, can be known only from its close¹.

PART V. SECT. I.

The Lamb on mount Sion.

CHAP. XIV. 1—5.

1 “AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion,
and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having
2 his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard
a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the
voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers
3 harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new
song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the
elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred
and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the
4 earth. These are they which were not defiled with women;
for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb
5 whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among
men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And
in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault
before the throne of God.”

¹ The observations of Dr Samuel Clarke on this subject are very valuable. “There has prevailed,” he observes, “among learned men, a very important error, as if the 1260 days (or years) here spoken of, took their beginning from the rise of the tyranny here described. Whereas, on the contrary, the words of Daniel are express, that, not from the time of his rise, but after his having made war with the saints, and from the time of their being given into his hand, should be a time, and times, and dividing of time, chap. vii. 24, 25. And St John no less expressly says, that the time, not of the two witnesses prophesying, (for in part of that time they had great power,) but of their prophesying in sackcloth,

should be a thousand two hundred and threescore days. Rev. xi. 3. And the persecuted woman, after her flight, was to be actually in the wilderness, a thousand two hundred and threescore days, chap. xii. 6. Wherefore also, the forty and two months, (the very same period,) during which time power was given unto the wild beast to continue, (in the original it is ποιῆσαι, to do what he pleased, Rev. xiii. 5.) evidently ought not to be reckoned from his rise, or from the time when the ten kings (ch. xvii. 12.) received power with him; but from the time of his having totally overcome the saints, and of his being worshipped by all them that dwell on the earth, ch. xiii. 7, 8.” *Evidences, Works*, Vol. II. p. 722. note.

THIS vision represents to the prophet the rejoicings, which take place in heaven on the approaching overthrow of the great apostasy. The 144000 of those, who had been before, in the seventh chapter, represented as having been sealed, are here seen with the Lamb on Mount Sion, joining in hallelujahs at the approach of that happy time, when the reign of Christ would commence, and the enemies of his truth would be destroyed. The majority of commentators, Mede, Vitringa, Bishop Newton, Faber, Woodhouse, and others, suppose the company, who appear with the Lamb on Mount Sion, to represent "the true persecuted, suffering Church, which throughout the reign of the dragon, beast, and false prophet, refuses to worship the image, and receive the mark of the beast²." It appears, however, that the vision may be understood, with more propriety, of the rejoicings of the glorified spirits in heaven on the approaching overthrow of the enemies of the Lamb.

This view of the vision in this chapter is taken by Lowman and Cunninghame; the latter of whom has supported his reasoning by some arguments which appear to be unanswerable. "During the reign of the beast," he observes, "the Church is symbolized by two witnesses clothed in sackcloth, the garb of mourning. She is also represented as having fled into a secret retreat in the wilderness, where she is concealed from the face of the serpent that seeks to destroy her. On the contrary, the one hundred and forty-four thousand, in this passage, stand upon mount Sion, a place of the most conspicuous elevation, and the most opposite to a state of concealment in the wilderness that can well be imagined. The voices

² Woodhouse ad locum.

heard by the Apostle from heaven, like the noise of many waters and of thunder, and the voice of harpers playing on their harps, are also the emblems of triumphant songs of thanksgiving, which it were quite incongruous to suppose applicable to the condition of the depressed Church in the wilderness before the Reformation. There is mention made of voices in heaven in three other passages of this mysterious book, but they are all indicative of the triumphs of the Church. The first place, in the order of chronology, is on the fall of Satan from heaven to the earth, and the victory of Michael¹; the second is at the sounding of the seventh Trumpet²; the third is on the destruction of Babylon³." The song, which these blessed spirits sing before the throne of God, is the glorious song of Redemption; the song of Moses and of the Lamb; the song which no man could comprehend, but the one hundred and forty-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth! The subject of the rejoicing, therefore, in this vision, is the same with that of the sixth Seal and the seventh Trumpet, the overthrow of the enemies of God and of Christ; the commencement of that period of divine vengeance, which, during the pouring out of the seven vials, is brought to its close. The sixth Seal represented to us the sealing of the 144000 *before* the trials of the Church commenced. They are *now* represented in their triumphant state, as being "without fault before the throne of God:" and if "there is joy in heaven amongst the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth⁴" on earth, what bounds can we place to

¹ Rev. xii. 10.

² Rev. xi. 15.

³ Rev. xix. 1—6. Cunninghame,
p. 276.

⁴ Luke xv. 10.

the rejoicings in heaven at the prospect of that blessed time, when all the enemies of the truth shall be destroyed, and the kingdom of the Redeemer shall become universal.

Any inferior exposition of this sublime vision appears to fall below the sublime character of the vision itself, and of the language, in which it is described by the prophet.

PART V. SECT. II.

The first Angel proclaims.

XIV. 6, 7.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having 6 the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; 7 for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

IN this vision of the angel, flying midway through the heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, appears to be represented that universal preaching of the Gospel, which is to precede the establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer; proclaiming aloud to the nations, that the hour of God's judgment is come, in which he will execute vengeance on all the ungodliness and idolatry of the world; and inviting all kindreds and people of the world to come and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. “It has been the endeavour of the anti-christian powers to corrupt or

secrete this Gospel, which is to lead all nations and languages to the knowledge and worship of the Almighty Creator. So the progress of the Reformation seems here to be prefigured, which, from its first dawnings, ever appealed to the everlasting Gospel as the sole rule of faith, and preached the restoration of Gospel worship in opposition to the reigning impurities and superstitions¹."

PART V. SECT. III.

The second Angel proclaims.

XIV. 8.

8 "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

ANOTHER angel follows, proclaiming the fall of the mystical Babylon, that great city, which had intoxicated, and seduced, and corrupted the nations with her impure religion². This city, and her fall, will be more particularly represented in chapters xvii. and xviii. But it is of importance to remark the period of her fall, as it is represented in this prophecy: which is just after the angel has been commissioned to carry the everlasting Gospel through the world. The *commencement* of her fall took place, when, after a long night of darkness, the light of the Gospel first dawned upon the world at the period of the Reformation; and when the Gospel shall have been preached more extensively through the world, we may look for a more visible and evident destruction of her power.

¹ Woodhouse.

² Ibid.

PART V. SECT. IV.

The third Angel proclaims.

XIV. 9—12.

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud 9
 voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive
 his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink 10
 of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without
 mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tor-
 mented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy
 angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of 11
 their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have
 no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image,
 and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the 12
 patience of the saints: here are they that keep the command-
 ments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

“A THIRD angel proclaims just and eternal ven-
 geance upon those who ‘worship the beast;’ who,
 knowing their duty and allegiance to God, sacrifice
 them to their worldly interests and views. They
 are threatened with ‘the wine of the wrath of
 God;’ the wine which is at first strong of itself,
 unmixed, (*ἄκρατον*), has no diluting liquor put into
 it to reduce its strength, as was the custom with
 the eastern nations of antiquity. But, secondly, it
 is *κεκρασμένον*, rendered still stronger by the mix-
 ture of powerful, intoxicating ingredients³.” The
 dreadful effects of God’s wrath are represented by
 similar expressions in other parts of Scripture⁴; where
 the evident object of them is not only those punish-
 ments, which are inflicted by the Almighty upon
 the wicked in this life, but those which await them

³ Woodhouse.

⁴ Compare Psal. xi. 8; Lx. 3;
 Lxxv. 8. Isai. li. 17—23. Jer. xxv.
 15, 16, &c. Lam. iv. 21, &c.; and the

valuable illustration of this expression,
 which is extracted by Dean Woodhouse
 from Bishop Lowth’s note on Isai. li.
 20.

in the eternal world, where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The angel then declares the dreadful punishments, by which the effects of the divine wrath will be evidenced in those who worship the Beast and his image,—that "they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." It is in the fidelity, with which the faithful servants of God resist every temptation to withdraw them from the service of their Divine Master, that the great trial of "the patience of the saints" consists; and of them "that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

PART V. SECT. V.

The Blessedness of those who die in the Lord.

XIV. 13.

- 13 "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

THE two preceding angels had declared the dreadful punishments, which await those who worship the Beast and his image; and forsake their Saviour. A voice from heaven now proclaims the blessedness of those faithful persons, who, unseduced by temptation, and unmoved by persecution and

suffering, "die in the Lord." "Yea, saith the Spirit,"—whatever trials they may have been doomed to endure in their passage through life,—whatever afflictions and sufferings may have been the reward of their sincerity and truth,—“they rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them” into the kingdom of their Redeemer and their God.

It is justly observed by Dean Woodhouse, that “these four proclamations are plain in their meaning, and of easy solution to those who are versed in scriptural language. They seem intended to be so, in order that all Christians may be encouraged, in their time of trial, to preserve their allegiance to their Lord, the Lamb, whose banner is unfolded in this chapter¹.”

PART V. SECT. VI.

The Vision of the Harvest and the Vintage.

XIV. 14—20.

“And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the 14 cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another 15 angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on 16 the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel 17 came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, 18 which had power over fire²; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the 19

¹ Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

² Habens ministerium iræ Divinæ, immitendæ in impios, tanquam hostias

Deo mactandos super altare. Vid. supra, chap. VIII. 5, 7; IX. 15; XI. 5. Grot. Hamm.

earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the
20 great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press
was trodden without the city; and blood came out of the
wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a
thousand and six hundred furlongs."

THE preceding visions, which are contained in this chapter, have presented to us, in rapid outline, some of the glorious and eventful incidents, connected with the overthrow of the dominion of the Dragon, and the final establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer. We have, as on the occasion of the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, the voices of the heavenly hosts, announcing the approach of that blessed time, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ¹. This is followed by an angel, flying through the midst of heaven, the bearer of the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Then we hear another angel proclaiming the fall of the great spiritual Babylon, who had made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication. This is followed by another angel, who denounces the eternal vengeance of God on those who worship the Beast and his Image. After this, a voice from heaven, the throne of God, proclaims the blessedness of those who die in the Lord! The last vision exhibits the Son of Man himself, appearing in majesty and glory to execute his vengeance upon the enemies of his truth; not indeed in that final judgment of the great day, when the Son of Man shall come in visible glory, and all his holy angels with him, to judge the world; but in that judgment of the enemies of God, which, we are taught, both in this book and in the prophecies of the

¹ Comp. chap. xi. 15—19.

Old Testament, is to precede the Millennium and the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom. The conflict of the Son of God with his enemies, which is here described, is probably to be considered the same with that, which is described by the Prophet Joel, in his last chapter; when that terrible destruction of the nations will take place in the valley of Jehoshaphat; and in which the destruction of God's enemies is described nearly in the same language, which is used in this prophecy of the Apocalypse: "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow: for their wickedness is great*²." It is the same with that of Isaiah, in which the Prophet beheld the Redeemer *coming from Edom, with his garments died in blood, having trodden the wine-press*³; with that of Ezekiel relative to Gog and Magog, in which the same great conflict with the enemies of God, and their destruction, is also foretold⁴; and with those which are contained in the sixteenth and nineteenth chapters of this prophecy; in the first of which the Prophet describes the destruction of God's enemies in the battle of Armageddon, and, in the last, he represents the word of God as coming forth to the destruction of his enemies, and "treading the wine-press of the fierce-

² Joel iii. 12, 13. Compare Jerem. li. 33. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel; *The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while,*

and the time of her harvest shall come." Compare also Isai. xvii. 3. Vid. Mede, Works. pp. 647—8.

³ Isai. lxiii. 1—6.

⁴ Ezek. xxxviii.—ix.

subject of so large a portion of this book. With regard to the highly figurative language, which this passage contains, the judicious interpreter of Scripture will explain it according to the analogy of prophecy,—and particularly of those passages in the ancient Prophets, which appear to have the same awful events in view,—as illustrative of the terrible character of the judgments of Almighty God! Indeed, Bishop Newton, in his remarks on this prophecy, has supplied us with a valuable illustration of the force and meaning of the expressions, which are used in the close of this chapter: “It is said,” he observes, “ver. 20, that the ‘blood came even unto the horses bridles;’ which is a strong hyperbolical way of speaking, to express vast slaughter and effusion of blood; a way of speaking not unknown to the Jews; for the Jerusalem Talmud, describing the woeful slaughter which the Roman Emperor Adrian made of the Jews at the destruction of the city of *Bitter*, saith, that *the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils*. Nor are similar examples wanting even in classic writers; for Silius Italicus, speaking of Annibal’s descent into Italy, useth the like expression; *the bridles flowing with much blood*.”

Bishop Horsley would understand the judgment, which is described in the close of this chapter, of the judgment, which will be executed on the wicked at the last day; and in this opinion he is followed by Mr Cunninghame. But perhaps the preceding arguments are sufficient to shew, that it may with more propriety be applied to the fall of Anti-Christ. Mede, Bishop Newton, Vitringa, and others, consider the prophecy which is contained in this chapter,

as a *continuation* of that which is contained in the preceding chapter; and, as they interpret the description in vers. 1-5 of the true suffering Church during the reign of the Beast, so do they continue to apply the following verses to the different stages of the Reformation. They understand the sixth and seventh verses of those eminent men, who, amidst the universal corruption, denounced the reigning superstition, and by their preaching led the way to the blessed change which followed; and Bishop Newton explains the thirteenth verse, with reference to the clearness and certainty with which the doctrine of a future life was invested at the Reformation, when the doctrine of Purgatory and other corruptions were exploded by the preaching of the Reformers. It would be impossible, and it is unnecessary, to consider all the different events connected with this period, to which these learned writers apply different parts of the prophecy contained in this chapter; our more immediate concern being the vindication of the *principle*, on which the preceding exposition has been founded: and we have seen that it is in perfect conformity with the general plan and method of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. It is, moreover, in perfect agreement with the prophecies of Daniel relating to the same period. The commission of the angel to bear the everlasting Gospel through the world, is in perfect harmony with the declaration of the prophecy of Daniel, that "*before the time of the end, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*"¹. The assurance of the trials which await the faithful servants of God, and of the triumphs

¹ Dan. xii. 4.

and blessedness of those who *die in the Lord*, corresponds with the revelation, which was made to Daniel, of the trials which would await the Church of God; that "*many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand: but the wise shall understand*." Of course, we cannot expect to attain to certainty in the interpretation of prophecies, of which the greater part remains yet to be fulfilled. But it affords a most convincing evidence of the divine character of prophecy, when we observe so remarkable an agreement between the prophecies of both dispensations; and we derive an additional inducement to the diligent study of this interesting subject, if we can thus attain to a better knowledge of that wonderful plan of Redemption; which, (though, in the extent of its mercies and the mysterious means by which it will be accomplished, it is even now enveloped in the clouds and darkness which surround the eternal throne;)—yet is daily receiving new accessions of light; as the revolutions of ages and the events of the world unfold with a clearness, which is continually increasing, the magnificence and extent of the Almighty counsels for the happiness and salvation of man.

Dean Woodhouse, as he supposes the 144,000 of the sealed, described in the beginning of the chapter, to represent the pure Christian Church during the reign of the Beast, so he believes the progress of the Reformation to be described in the following verses; and the close of the chapter to exhibit the punishment which will be inflicted by the Redeemer on the enemies of the truth². Grotius and Hammond,

¹ Dan. xii. 10.

² Woodhouse, *Annotations*, pp. 312—319.

in conformity with the opinions which are maintained by them with regard to the interpretation of the thirteenth chapter, understand this chapter of Pagan Rome, and the overthrow of idolatry in the Roman Empire: and in this opinion they are, as usual, followed by Bishop Bossuet.

PART V. SECT. VII.

The Vision preparatory to the seven Vials.

CHAP. XV.

"AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, 1
seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is
filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of 2
glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory
over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and
over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having
the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the 3
servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great
and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and
true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear 4
thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy:
for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy
judgments are made manifest. And after that I looked, and, 5
behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven
was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, 6
having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen,
and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And 7
one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven
golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever
and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the 8
glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to
enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven
angels were fulfilled."

THE last chapter, as we have seen, presented to us, in rapid outline, the events which are comprehended under the seventh Trumpet, and which are connected with the overthrow of the great anti-christian apostasy. This is the third woe Trumpet,

charged with the destruction which is to fall on the enemies of Christ; and of which the different stages in its progress are marked by the seven Vials. The fifteenth chapter contains the introduction to this awful manifestation of the vengeance of Almighty God. "And as seven angels, by sounding the alarm with Trumpets, had foreshown the several shocks of battle which the Church should sustain from her enemies, so seven angels, by pouring forth seven Vials, express the vengeance of the Almighty, poured out on the triumphant worldly powers, checking their career, embittering their success, and finally overwhelming them in destruction¹."

The prophet beholds in glorious vision the seven angels, the ministers of the Divine vengeance, having the seven last plagues, and charged with the execution of the wrath of God on the enemies of his Church. As God sent his plagues upon the Egyptians, as the punishment of their wickedness and rebellion against the Most High, and of their cruel oppression and persecution of his people; so, in like manner, do these seven last plagues represent the final execution of the Divine vengeance on the enemies and the persecutors of his Church: and this imagery is here employed by the Apostle with peculiar propriety, when we consider, that it is under the name of this corrupt and idolatrous people, that he has before described the persecutors of the Church of the Redeemer, and the enemies of his everlasting truth (chap. xi. 8.). The prophet then beholds on the sea of glass, which was before the throne, and which had been before exhibited to him in the opening of the heavenly vision², the glorious company of those blessed

¹ Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 321.

² Chap. iv. 6.

spirits, who "had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name;" and who, like the children of Israel, when they stood on the shore, and beheld their enemies overwhelmed in the sea, *sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb*, on the approaching execution of Divine vengeance on the enemies of God^s. After this, the Apostle immediately beholds the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven opened: and seven angels, clothed in pure and white linen, and their breasts girded with golden girdles, having the seven plagues, come forth out of the temples, to pour forth the contents of the seven Vials, which are charged with the vengeance of Almighty God. Thus, upon the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, and after the voices of the heavenly host had proclaimed the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament," (chap. xi. 19.); emblematical, as we have before observed, of the more perfect revelation of the wonders and mysteries of redemption, which will accompany this final accomplishment of the dispensations of God.

This is one of the various coincidences which connect the Vials with the seventh Trumpet; and teach us to look, in that execution of the Divine vengeance on the enemies of the truth, which is symbolized in them, for the fulfilment of that, which is the great end of the dispensations contained in this Trumpet; when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ." And as, under the old dispensation, upon the consecration

^s See Vitringa, p. 681.

of the Tabernacle by Moses, and the dedication of the Temple by Solomon¹, when the glory of the Lord filled them both, the priests could not stand to minister; so, in like manner, is this manifestation of the Divine glory in the heavenly Temple,—in which “the Temple was filled with smoke from the glory of the Lord, and from his power, and no man was able to enter into the Temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled,”—at once an evidence of the extraordinary interposition of God in the execution of these judgments; and of the unsearchable character of those dispensations, as yet unfulfilled; by which God will accomplish his gracious purposes, in the destruction of the enemies of his truth and the final establishment of his everlasting kingdom².

PART V. SECT. VIII.

The seven Vials poured out.

CHAP. XVI.

- 1 “AND I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to
- 2 the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of
- 3 the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and
- 4 poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome
- 5 and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the
- 6 beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the
- 7 second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became
- 8 as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in
- 9 the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the
- 10 rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And
- 11 I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord,
- 12 which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged

¹ Compare Exod. xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10, 11; Isai. vi. 4; Ezek. xlv. 4, &c.

² See Bishop Newton, and the excellent remarks of Vitringa, pp. 690—2. ad locum.

thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, 6
 and thou hast given them blood to drink ; for they are worthy.
 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God 7
 Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. And the 8
 fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power
 was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were 9
 scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God,
 which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not
 to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial 10
 upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of dark-
 ness ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed 11
 the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and
 repented not of their deeds. And the sixth angel poured out 12
 his vial upon the great river Euphrates ; and the water thereof
 was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might
 be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come 13
 out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of
 the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For 14
 they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go
 forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world,
 to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.
 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and 15
 keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his
 shame. And he gathered them together into a place called 16
 in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel 17
 poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice
 out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is
 done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings ; 18
 and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men
 were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.
 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities 19
 of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance
 before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierce-
 ness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the moun- 20
 tains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail 21
 out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : and
 men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for
 the plague thereof was exceeding great."

"THE seventh Trumpet," as Dean Woodhouse has justly observed, "appears to give birth to, and to comprehend, all the Vials³:" and this point is fully admitted by the great majority of the commentators on the Apocalypse. This Trumpet sounds the downfall of the great apostasies, and the establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer. In the Vials,

³ *Annotations*, p. 329.

therefore, we look for successive attacks on the different branches of the great anti-christian apostasy: and this consideration will enable to form a judgment of the peculiar *character* of the events comprehended in them. Now we have seen, that all the great corruptions of Christianity, (whether it be those which were connected with the different Gnostic heresies, and the controversies relative to the person of our Saviour, the agitation of which from the third to the fifth century was attended with such desolating effects to the Christian world, or those which are connected with the Mahometan and Papal apostasies,) arose either from the suppression or the corruption of the pure doctrines of the Gospel; so, in like manner, may we expect, that it must be from the publication of the Gospel in its purity, that these great corruptions must be overthrown. We may observe, therefore, in the fourteenth chapter, that immediately after the heavenly voices had proclaimed the approaching triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom, an angel is seen by the prophet to fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people: after which another angel announces the fall of the great spiritual Babylon, and the final overthrow of the anti-christian powers. These considerations, therefore, will supply us with a valuable guide in the interpretation of the prophecies, which are contained in the Vials. But, secondly, this consideration of the prophecies contained in the Vials, as being comprehended in the seventh Trumpet, will enable us to form a more accurate judgment with regard to the *period* in which we may look for their accomplishment. Now if the prophecies

contained in the Vials belong to the seventh Trumpet, it is evident that they must belong to *times future*: and, therefore, it ought to make us hesitate about applying them to present events, and to teach us modesty in pronouncing an opinion, with regard to the peculiar *character* and *time* of their accomplishment.

In order that we may understand clearly the character of the symbols, which are employed in this portion of the Apocalypse, it will be necessary for us to ascertain the form and description of the *Vial*, as well as the purposes to which it was applied, as far as they can be collected from Scriptural authority. "The *φιάλη*," Dean Woodhouse observes, "or, as we write it, *Vial*, was a basin, bowl, or cup, commonly used in the ancient Church, to contain the offering of meal or incense, standing before the altar of incense for that purpose. It was also used to pour from, as in 1 Sam. x. 1. In these seven Vials was deposited neither oil, meal, nor incense, but *the wrath of God*." When delivered to the angels, they were "filled with the wrath of God." All conjecture, by Vitrina and others, whether fire, or any noxious liquor, was in the Vials, is therefore needless: "they were full of the wrath of God." Therefore, when the terrible judgments of the offended God descend upon his enemies, they are said in scriptural language to be "poured out upon them¹." This metaphor is constantly used throughout the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; and is, therefore, used with great propriety in this book, which contains the last and most awful prophecy of the judgments of Almighty God on the enemies of his truth.

¹ *Annotations*, p. 326.

There is a great *apparent analogy* between the subjects of the Trumpets and the Vials: but there is a great *actual difference*; because the Trumpets proclaim war against the *Christian Church*, while her *enemies* are the subject of the Vials. In addition to this, as has been already observed, they relate to different periods of time, the seven Vials probably being all of them contained in the seventh Trumpet.

Keeping these considerations in view, we may, with advantage to this investigation, compare the different subjects of the Trumpets and Vials, as they are drawn out by Dean Woodhouse:

The seven Trumpets.

1. UPON the *land*; hail, fire, and blood; a third of the trees, and all green grass burnt up.

2. Upon the *sea*; a third part of the sea becomes blood; and the third of the creatures die.

3. Upon the *rivers and springs*; a burning star, wormwood falls, and many die of the embittered waters.

4. Upon the *sun*, moon, and stars, the third of which is darkened.

The three Woes.

5. The bottomless pit opened, *smoke and darkness*, and scorpion locusts injure the men unsealed five months.

6. Four angels, loosed from Euphrates, lead the cavalry who slay the third of men; the rest are unrepentant.

The prophecy of the times of the Gentiles, and of the witnesses, during 1260 days, is opened under this Trumpet.

The seven Vials.

1. UPON the *land*, afflictive to the worshippers of the beast.

2. Upon the *sea*; as the blood of a dead carcase; every soul dies.

3. Upon the *rivers and springs* blood; a just judgment and retaliation on the murderers of the saints.

4. Upon the *sun*; the men are scorched with great heat; and blaspheme, and repent not.

5. Upon the throne of the beast, *darkening* his kingdom; they bite their tongues from suffering, blaspheme, and repent not of their works.

6. On the great river Euphrates, which is dried up to prepare the way of the eastern kings.

Frogs, spirits of demons, working wonders to gather the kings of the whole world to the battle of the great day.

7. The grand conflict of the dragon, beast, and false prophet, with the Lamb and his followers; in the course of which the seven Vials are poured out.

7. Into the air; "It is done!" an unparalleled earthquake divides the great city into three parts; cities of the nations fall; Babylon remembered; islands and mountains are no more; great hail; men continue to blaspheme.

1. In the first Vial, poured upon the earth, a noisome and grievous sore falls upon the men, who are marked as subjects or slaves of the beast, and worshippers of his image.

2. The second Vial is poured upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.

3. The third Vial is poured upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and they became blood; a just retribution for the blood of saints and prophets poured out by their persecutors: upon which another angel out of the altar (for *under the altar were the souls of them who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held*'), declares, *Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

4. The fourth Vial is poured out on the sun; and the effect is, that men are scorched with great heat, which causes them to blaspheme the name of God; but produces in them no repentance.

Both Bishop Newton and Dean Woodhouse have judiciously avoided attempting to give any particular explanation of the subjects of these Vials. The main object of them is very evident,—to denounce the righteous judgments of God on the persecutors of his saints and the enemies of his Church. This

¹ Chap. vi. 9, 10.

must have been a great source of consolation to the early Christians; and is calculated to afford a strong ground of consolation to *us*, in the assurance, that the enemies of God and of his truth will finally be destroyed. But it is impossible to expect a more particular knowledge of prophecies, of which probably the greater part remain yet to be fulfilled.

5. The fifth Vial is poured out on the seat of the Beast; and, like Egypt under the infliction of her ninth plague, his kingdom becomes full of darkness. But still, as in the case of the former plagues, it produces no repentance in those who were afflicted by it; but they gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of heaven, and repent not of their deeds. This darkness, a spiritual darkness, occasioned by the withdrawing of the blessed light of the Gospel¹, falls upon the *whole extent* of the spiritual empire and dominion of the Beast; a just retribution on those, who have been so instrumental in withdrawing the light of the Gospel from mankind. The general truth of this prophecy is evidenced in the present condition of those nations, who enjoy the pure light of the Gospel, above those where Popery predominates: "but," as Dean Woodhouse has justly observed, "it is highly probable that we are still to look forward to the future for the perfect fulfilment of this prophecy, as introductory to the final fall of the Beast and his coadjutors under the seventh Vial."

6. The sixth angel pours out his Vial on the great river Euphrates; of which the consequence is, "the drying up of the waters thereof, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." It

¹ Compare chap. ix. 2.

was upon the sounding of the sixth Trumpet (ix. 14.) that the four angels were loosed, which were bound in the great river Euphrates,—the leaders of that dreadful apostasy, which, even now at the present day, binds the nations in that region of the world in the double chain of a spiritual and temporal slavery. The pouring out of this Vial on the river Euphrates, may, therefore, be interpreted of the destruction of this dreadful power; and the drying up of the waters of Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared, appears to point to that blessed time, when these nations shall be converted to the faith of Christ; when “the Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising² ;” when to those innumerable tribes in the Eastern world, which are now lying in darkness and the shadow of death, the glory of the Lord shall rise in meridian splendour; and a way shall be opened to them to the faith of the Gospel, as when the sea was divided before God’s chosen people, when he led them into the promised land. But still this great deliverance will not be accomplished, without great resistance on the part of the infidel and anti-christian powers; whom the spirit of evil will rouse into rebellion against the Almighty, and will seduce them by lying miracles to that last great conflict, in which they will be overthrown. Such, probably, are “the unclean spirits like frogs,” which are described as proceeding out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet,—his great instruments in the ruin and deception of mankind. This, as it has been before remarked, appears to be the same

² Isai. lx. 3.

great conflict, which is described in the close of the fourteenth chapter, and which is again the subject of another prophecy, when the Lamb descends to battle and to victory¹.

Vitringa has refuted with great ability, and by very conclusive arguments, the opinion which has been entertained by Brightman and Mede, that by the kings, who are here mentioned, we are to understand the Jews, either already converted, or passing the river to be converted to Christianity. He has shewn that the conversion of the Jews is never once expressly mentioned in the Apocalypse². Indeed, the comparison of this Vial with the sixth Trumpet, and the consideration of the analogy, which exists between the subjects of the preceding Vials and Trumpets, naturally leads us to look for the fulfilment of the prophecy which is contained in it, in the overthrow of that apostate and tyrannical power, of which the great seat is in the regions of the East; and which for so many ages has desolated and enslaved so large a portion of the human race.

7. The seventh angel pours out his Vial into the air; the region, of which Satan is especially denominated "the Prince" (Ephes. ii. 2.). "The anti-christian powers are therefore attacked in their strongest hold, and in every part. The discharge of this Vial is accompanied with a voice from the throne in heaven, proclaiming by the emphatic expression, *γέγρονε*, *It is done*, the completion of the promise, (chap. x.), that at the sound of this Trumpet 'the mystery of God should be finished³.'" The pouring out of this Vial is followed by the most awful convulsions of nature, such as are described in other

¹ Chap. xix. 11—21.

² Vitringa, p. 719.

³ *Annot.* pp. 345, 346.

passages of this book; and which are symbolical of the destruction of the great anti-christian apostasy; in the midst of which "great Babylon comes in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of his wrath⁴." Such we have seen to be the symbolical meaning of the earthquake, and of the fall of the tenth part of the city, under the sixth Trumpet. But, in the midst of these judgments, men still continue unrepentant and blasphemous; one circumstance amongst others, which, as Dean Woodhouse has observed, distinguishes it from the description of the great convulsion, which is described under the sixth Seal; and which is probably to be understood, in its final accomplishment, with reference to the great consummation of all things⁵.

It is impossible that we can close our remarks on this chapter, without alluding to that sublime and solemn admonition which is contained in it, and which immediately follows the description of the most awful judgments of God: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame:"—an admonition, which, being found in other places, adds so much to the solemnity and deep religious interest of this wonderful prophecy; and which applies, not only to those, who may be alive upon the earth at the time when these awful declarations of prophecy will be fulfilled; but to all who hope for comfort and divine support, amidst the trials, with which it may please God, even yet in our own day, to visit the Church and the world.

If the arguments be valid, by which it was at-

⁴ Chap. vi. 12—14; xi. 13.

⁵ *Annotations*, p. 347.

tempted, in the beginning of this section, to prove that the Vials arise out of, and are contained in the seventh Trumpet; and that the events, therefore, which are foretold in them, must be in a great measure *future*; it is evident, that the opinions of those learned writers, who have looked for them in the events of the French revolution, are not founded in truth. Indeed, awful as these events were at the time they happened, in their effects on the moral and religious interests of the civilized world, which even at this distance of time feels the effect of that tremendous convulsion,—they are hardly commensurate to the language which is here employed; which seems to be applicable only to some great convulsions, such as those, which we are led in Scripture to believe, will attend those great changes in the moral and political condition of the world, by which the great religious apostasies will be overthrown, and the Redeemer's kingdom established on their ruins. In the same manner, with regard to the seat of the bestial Empire; which has been fixed by different commentators, in Rome, in Austria¹, in France,—in the first instance in the seventeenth century², and again at a later period, when, at the Revolution, every ancient institution, both political and religious, was overthrown,—all which countries, according to the circumstances of the particular period, have been fixed upon as the seat of the beast; no interpretation seems to be adequate to the symbol which is employed, short of *the whole spiritual empire and dominion of the Beast*. If it

¹ See Mosheim, Cent. xvii. Sect. 11. Chap. 1.

² During the period of the revo-

cation of the Edict of Nantes. See Mosheim, Cent. xvii. Sect. 11. Chap. 11.

be objected to this view of the prophecies contained in the Vials, that it leaves the *particular character* of the judgments contained in them involved in darkness; we may answer, that it is impossible, and it would be presumptuous, to attempt the *particular* explanation of unfulfilled prophecy; and that,—amidst all the uncertainty with regard to the particular method, or the particular train of events, by which these things will be brought to pass,—the great object of these prophecies is still very clear, namely, the final and total overthrow of the enemies of the truth. The *tendency* of the events of the world, both political and religious, is evidently favourable to the accomplishment of the events foretold in these prophecies. But it is probable, that we must look for a more extensive propagation of the Gospel, before the *character* of these judgments will be more visibly displayed: and it is no real objection to this view of the prophecies contained in the Vials, that, instead of attempting to define accurately “the times and the seasons which the Father hath placed in his own power,” it rather looks to a *gradual* accomplishment of the purposes of Almighty God. The *rise* of these great apostasies was, as we have seen, *gradual* at first through many ages; though the course of events at length hastened them on rapidly to their height, as was the case particularly with the Mahometan apostasy. We may, therefore, reasonably expect, that the same thing will happen in the case of their *decline*. Its progress may be slow for a long period, but this will probably be hastened as it advances to its consummation; so as,—what appears to be directly intended in the strong language which is employed in this prophecy,—to

give to the world at large the most convincing evidence of divine interference, and of the visible exertion of the power and providence of God.

PART V. SECT. IX.

The Destruction of the spiritual Babylon.

CHAPS. XVII. XVIII.

- 1 "AND there came one of the seven angels which had the
seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither ;
I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that
- 2 sitteth upon many waters : With whom the kings of the earth
have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth
- 3 have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So
he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness : and I
saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names
- 4 of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the
woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked
with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden
cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her for-
- 5 nication : And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMI-
- 6 NATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with
the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of
Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.
- 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel ?
I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast
that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.
- 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not ; and shall ascend
out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition : and they that
dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written
in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they
- 9 behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here
is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven
- 10 mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven
kings : five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come ;
- 11 and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And
the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is
- 12 of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns
which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no king-
dom as yet ; but receive power as kings one hour with the
- 13 beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and
- 14 strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb,
and the Lamb shall overcome them : for he is Lord of lords,
and King of kings : and they that are with him are called, and

chosen, and faithful. And he saith unto me, The waters which 15
 thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and mul-
 titudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which 16
 thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and
 shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh,
 and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to 17
 fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the
 beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the 18
 woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth
 over the kings of the earth."

"AND after these things I saw another angel come down from 1
 heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with
 his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, 2
 Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habi-
 tation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage 3
 of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk
 of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings 4
 of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the
 merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance
 of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, 5
 saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers
 of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her 6
 sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her
 iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double 7
 unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she
 hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified 8
 herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give
 her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow,
 and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come 9
 in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall
 be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who
 judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed 10
 fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and
 lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,
 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, 11
 that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy
 judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep 12
 and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any
 more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, 13
 and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet,
 and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all
 manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron,
 and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and 14
 frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and
 beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and
 souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are 15
 departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and
 goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no
 more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made
 rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment,

16 weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city,
that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and
17 decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in
one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-
master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many
18 as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the
smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this
19 great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried,
weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein
were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her
20 costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over
her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God
21 hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a
stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying,
Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown
22 down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of
harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall
be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of what-
soever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the
sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;
23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee;
and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be
heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the
great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations
24 deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and
of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

WE have already had occasion to remark the peculiarity of structure which belongs to some of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; in which one prophecy often explains and illustrates another; and the earlier prophecies derive light and illustration from those which follow after. The same peculiarity, as was also observed, belongs to many of the ancient prophecies, and particularly to the prophecies of Daniel; which are so intimately connected, both in their subject and their structure, with the prophecies of the Apocalypse: and it is wonderfully adapted to serve one of the main objects of prophecy,—namely, to throw additional light over the different subjects of prophecy, as they advance towards the period of their accomplishment; and thus to add weight, and clearness to those prophecies, which are con-

nected with the most important interests of the Church and the world.

These remarks are closely connected with the subject of the prophecy which is contained in these chapters. The angel had declared to St John in the tenth chapter, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared unto his servants the prophets." The duration of this period, during which the holy city shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the witnesses shall prophesy in sackcloth, is fixed to the prophetical period of forty-two months, or 1260 days. The close of this period, upon the sounding of the seventh Trumpet, is celebrated by great voices in heaven, which proclaim, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. The subject is renewed in the twelfth chapter, in which the woman, by which is prefigured the Church, takes refuge in the wilderness from the persecution of the Serpent, *for a time, and times, and half a time*, which we have shewn to be the same period with the former; and during the same period the Beast, with seven heads and ten horns, and deriving all his power and authority from the Dragon, is permitted to direct his persecutions against the Church. After this, in the fourteenth chapter, the heavenly voices proclaim the close of the trials of the Church: "an angel is seen to fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;" and, after this, another angel proclaims the fall of "Babylon, that great city, because she

made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication." The chapter closes with a sublime description of the overthrow of the enemies of God and his truth. This is the first time that the mention of Babylon is introduced in the Apocalypse: and by "her making all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication," is to be understood, as is evident from the language of ancient prophecy, as it is applied to Babylon of old, and from the general usage of the prophetic language,—spiritual apostasy and idolatry. But the mystical Babylon and the Beast are also connected together in the sixteenth chapter; in which, in the pouring out of the Vials upon the enemies of God, the fifth angel is represented as pouring out his Vial on the seat of the Beast; and during the earthquake which accompanies the breaking up of the great anti-christian confederacy, "great Babylon is described as coming in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." She had, in her day, made the nations drunk with the intoxicating cup of her spiritual abominations; she is now made to partake, —a tremendous recompence!—"of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The dreadful corruptions of religion, of which she was guilty, were the cause which drew down upon her the vengeance of Almighty God; and the awful character of the punishment, which will be visited upon her, constitutes the subject of the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters; which, as they form the grand conclusion of the preceding prophecies, so do they derive material light and illustration from them, in a comparison with their several parts.

The prophet describes himself as carried away in the spirit into the wilderness; in the same manner as Ezekiel (chap. viii.) was carried in the spirit to Jerusalem, that he might behold the abominations in the temple at Jerusalem. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven Vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away by the spirit into the wilderness." And there the prophet "saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And he saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when he saw her he wondered with great admiration." This is the same woman, whom he had before beheld in the wilderness under a very different appearance, in primeval purity, clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and the dragon standing by, ready to devour her child, as soon as it should be born. She is *now* represented as arrayed in meretricious attire, carried on

the Beast, the agent of the Dragon, who is described in the following chapter, with seven heads and ten horns,—adorned in splendid and costly attire; having upon her forehead her title written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH; and he beholds her “drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.” She is moreover described as “sitting upon many waters,” which are afterwards described by the angel to mean “peoples, and nations, and multitudes, and tongues.” The inscription on the forehead of the whore implies that there was something *mysterious* connected with it, both with regard to her appellation and her character; and therefore the angel proceeds to explain to St John “*the mystery* of the woman and of the beast that carried her, which hath seven heads and ten horns.” “The beast which thou sawest was, and is not.” He seemed to have received his deadly wound; but he shall ascend from the vast abyss, under a different form and with renovated power: “and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” This is exactly what was declared with respect to the beast in the thirteenth chapter, upon his appearance in power *after his deadly wound was healed*¹. The angel then explains to the prophet the *mystery*, which is contained in the woman and the Beast: and he calls his attention to it by one of those solemn admonitions which are to be met with in other passages of this book:—“and

¹ Chap. xiii. 8.

here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." The seven mountains clearly point to Rome as the seat of the whore; and by the *kings*, or *kingdoms*, are represented the five different forms of government, kingly, consular, decemviral, and those which were exercised by military tribunes and dictators; which are described by Tacitus and Livy as constituting the five different forms of government, which existed at Rome, from the foundation of the Empire to the establishment of the Imperial authority; and which were *fallen* at the time the prophet wrote². "The sixth or Imperial head was then existing, and continued to exist till the year 475, when it terminated with Augustulus, the last emperor. To this Imperial form succeeded the government set up by the Gothic conquerors, when, after a short time, a magistrate, with the title of Exarch, presided at Rome³." The *eighth* was that spiritual tyranny, armed with temporal power, which was established at Rome on its ruins, and which, the prophet declares, "shall go into perdition." The ten horns represent ten kingdoms, into which the Roman Empire would afterwards be divided, and, in conjunction with the Beast, would make war with the Lamb; but which again would hate the

² Compare Tacitus, Annal. Lib. i. sub initio, and Liv. Lib. vi. 1.; and see Bishop Newton ad locum.

³ See Dean Woodhouse ad locum.

whore, and destroy her power'. To this description of the whore we may add that, which is contained in the following chapter; in which, after the appalling description of her luxury and her wealth, it is assigned as a reason of her punishment, that "by her sorceries were all nations deceived: and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Finally, that we might be under no mistake with regard to the application of this vision, "the woman," whom the prophet saw, is described to be "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth²."

The judgment of Babylon is described in the eighteenth chapter; and her fall and entire destruction is foretold in the most splendid imagery, borrowed from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which declared the destruction of ancient Babylon and of Tyre,—the two cities of antiquity, which perhaps were most distinguished for their corruption and idolatry, and their persecution of the people of God. As Jeremiah, when he had delivered his prophecy concerning ancient Babylon, was directed to "bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates," in token of its entire destruction; so, in like manner, the prophet and evangelist St John beholds in his vision a "mighty angel take up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all³." The judicious interpreter of prophecy will apply this imagery to the Babylon of the Apo-

¹ With regard to these ten kingdoms, see Vitrings, p. 776. Woodhouse, *Annotations*, p. 366.

² On this subject compare Bishop

Hurd, *Lectures on Prophecy*, Sermon xi.

³ Compare Jer. li. 63, 64, with Rev. xviii. 21.

calypse, in the way, and according to the spirit, in which the imagery of the prophetic language of the Old Testament is applied in other parts of this book; and in such a manner also as is most consistent with the sublime and awful subject of the prophecy.

The plain and obvious language of this prophecy has left little doubt with regard to the city, which is the great object of it; and in the representative of ancient Babylon, which is "seated on seven mountains," the views of all commentators, both Protestant and Catholic, have been directed to *Rome*; "that great city," which, at the time the prediction was delivered, "reigned over the kings of the earth." The ancient Babylon, at the time when the Apostle wrote, had been long in ruins. It was impossible then that the prophecy could be believed to be applicable to ancient Babylon; and therefore Christian interpreters, at a very early period, fixed its application upon *Rome*. The only doubt, which has existed amongst them, has been, whether it is *Imperial* or *Papal* Rome, which is the subject of the prophecy. The Protestant commentators, Grotius and Hammond, apply it, as they do the corresponding prophecy in the thirteenth chapter, to *Imperial* Rome; and in this opinion they are followed by Bishop Bossuet and the remainder of the Roman Catholic commentators. Grotius refers the description of the destruction of Rome, which is contained in the eighteenth chapter, to its plunder by Totilas under Justinian; while Bossuet prefers that which took place, when Alaric, with the Visigoths, at a former period, reduced the city to great extremities, gave it up to plunder, and burned part of it. But

Vitringa has clearly shewn, that neither the destruction, which was inflicted on it by these conquerors, nor the other circumstances connected with Rome, at and subsequent to that period, at all answer the terms of the prophecy¹. It may however be observed, that, if the reasoning be valid, by which, in a former chapter, it has been shewn that the period of 1260 days, which constitutes so important a feature in the chronology of the Apocalypse, is to be understood of a long period,—commencing probably in the seventh or eighth century, and extending to the sounding of the seventh Trumpet,—it is impossible that the prophecies contained in these two chapters can be understood of the destruction of ancient Rome; which was never so completely destroyed, as to fulfil the terms of this prophecy. The Beast, which carries the woman, is evidently the same with that which is described in the thirteenth chapter; and this belongs to the sixth Trumpet. The downfall of Babylon, which is the subject of the eighteenth chapter, belongs to the seventh Trumpet; and therefore is still *future*. It is evident, therefore, that the prophecy, which is contained in these chapters, belongs, both to the *present*, and also to some *future* period of the Church; in which the promises of God, with regard to the further extension of the Redeemer's kingdom and the overthrow of its anti-christian enemies, will be fulfilled. But it is important to show, that this prophecy, in its true and legitimate interpretation, can be applied only to the *spiritual* dominion of that Church, of which the principal seat or centre is at Rome.

¹ Vitringa, pp. 798—806.

1. In the first place, then, it may be observed, that the whole language of the vision is symbolical; and therefore it ought to be interpreted in conformity with the general purport of the symbols in ancient prophecy. These, as we have seen, are entirely of a spiritual character. Such is the meaning of the symbols of *adultery* and *fornication*, which are used in the ancient prophets to denote spiritual apostasy and idolatry. But to whom is this description applied by the angel? It is to the woman, whom the prophet beholds sitting upon the scarlet-coloured beast, "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication,"—the same woman, whom he had before beheld in the wilderness, in her former state, pursued and persecuted by the dragon. The same imagery is frequently applied in ancient prophecy to Jerusalem, under her backsliding and idolatry: and it is especially applied to ancient Babylon, which, in her earlier state, is described as a virgin²; but, in her more advanced state of corruption and idolatry, is represented as a harlot. "All the imagery belonging to this form of speech," as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "may be seen in complete allegory, in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where a forlorn female infant, under the fostering hand of Providence, grows up and becomes 'exceeding beautiful,' and 'prosperes into a kingdom;' but afterwards degenerates into an 'idolatress and a harlot.'" The same imagery appears again, in chap. xxi. of the Apocalypse; where to *Babylon*, the harlot, is opposed the *New Jerusalem*, the

² Isai. xl.vii. 1—5.

bride. This corrupt city, now exhibited, acquired her greatness and celebrity under the character of *harlot*; for her power over the kings and inhabitants of the earth is described as arising from her *fornication* with them: she is represented as beguiling them to drink of "the cup of her fornications;" and leading them intoxicated, through all the impurities of her idolatry, to that extreme madness of iniquity, when she wallows in the innocent blood of saints and martyrs. Possessing, by this influence, the riches of kings, she appears arrayed in vestments of the utmost splendour¹. But she is, moreover, carried on a beast of the same character. Such is the character of the beast in the thirteenth chapter, when he appears after his deadly wound was healed; where he is described as *having a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven; as making war with the saints and overcoming them; and as having power given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, and exacting worship from all that dwell upon the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*². Such he appears again, as he is described in the seventeenth chapter, in the plenitude of his power. The woman, therefore, and the beast which carries her, are distinguished by the same idolatrous and persecuting characters. No marvel that when the prophet beheld her, in such mournful contrast with her former character, in which she appeared to him before in the wilder-

¹ Woodhouse, pp. 418, 19.

² Compare chap. xiii. 3—8.

ness; dispensing to the nations of the world the intoxicating cup of her abominations, and "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;" that, when he saw her, he "wondered with great admiration." The persecuting character of Pagan Rome could excite in the prophet no admiration. It had been her distinguishing characteristic from the very beginning of the Gospel; and the Apostle was himself, at the time he saw these visions, suffering under its effects. But he might well be surprised, when he beheld the woman, who was exhibited to him in the wilderness, so changed from that pure, and primitive, and persecuted character, in which she appeared to him in the former vision. Moreover, the character of religious proselytism does not apply to Pagan Rome. "Ancient Rome," says Bishop Newton, "does not answer to the character; for she ruled more with *the rod of iron*, than with *the wine of her fornication*. What and where were the kings whom she courted and debauched to her communion? What and where were the people whom she inveigled and intoxicated with her idolatry? Her ambition was to extend her empire, not her religion. She permitted the conquered nations to continue in the religion of their ancestors, and to worship their own gods after their own rituals³." The fulfilment of this prophecy must be sought in the persecuting, the idolatrous, and the corrupt practices of Papal Rome. This is the *mystery*, which is comprehended in this vision. The respective characters also of the persons, who resist the worship of the Beast, as well as of those who give

³ Dissertation on chap. xvii.

way to it¹, prove the *spiritual* character of the apostasy.

2. Secondly, the application of this vision to *Papal*, and not to *Pagan* Rome, may be proved by a comparison of it with the characters of Antichrist, as they are found in other passages of Scripture. Such is that which is given of him by St Paul, who, in combatting a growing error then risen in the Church, that "the second coming of the Lord was at hand," says, *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there be a falling away first, and that MAN OF SIN be revealed, the Son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that WICKED ONE be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*².

¹ Compare chap. xvii. 8. with xiii. 8.

² 2 Thess. ii. 1—12.

Now this description of the Apostle has reference entirely to some *spiritual* apostasy. The great author of it is spoken of as THE MAN OF SIN, THE SON OF PERDITION, the WICKED ONE. He is described as *opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. His coming is described as being after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; and his end is described to be of the same character,—whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.* This is clearly some *anti-christian* power arising in the bosom of the Church itself. Its character corresponds closely with the *anti-christ* of the *Apocalypse*: its victims are of the same character with those who *wonder after the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* The *let*, which prevented the immediate appearance of the MAN OF SIN, is the same which is described in the *Apocalypse*, namely, the power of Imperial Rome; upon the removal of which, the *eighth* head was to appear. The *spiritual* character of *anti-christ* is also confirmed by the character of *anti-christ*, which is given by St John: *Little children, says he, it is the last time: and ye have heard that ANTI-CHRIST shall come: even now there are many anti-christs; whereby ye know that it is the last time.* And then, in other passages of the Epistle, he goes on to describe the character of these *anti-christian* enemies of the truth: *He is ANTI-CHRIST that denieth the Father*

*and the Son. Again: This is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. And again: Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and AN ANTI-CHRIST*¹. "Where," as Bishop Warburton has observed, "we see the appellation, ANTI-CHRIST, is employed to signify *an enemy of God and godliness in general*, by the same figure of speech that *Elias* was designed in those times to signify a *prophet*; and *Rachel*, a *daughter of Israel*; and that, in these times, *Judas* is used for a traitor, and *Nero* for a tyrant. But as these converted terms necessarily suppose that they originally belonged to persons of the like characters, who had them in *proper*; so does the name *anti-christ*, transferred by St John to some of his impious contemporaries, as necessarily suppose that there was ONE, who should arise in the latter times, to whom the title eminently belonged, as marked out in the prophecies by the *proper name of ANTI-CHRIST*²."

These passages of St John and St Paul prove the *character* of that great apostasy, which it was foretold would arise in the Christian Church under the name of *anti-christ*, that it is of a *religious* character; and that it cannot be applied, in its true meaning, to the persecuting power of Imperial Rome. Indeed, had such been the case, the Christians of that day would not have failed to make the application. The particular object indeed of the prophecy would not be evident, till circumstances pointed out its application: and though the earlier Fathers saw clearly that ROME was the object of St John's

¹ 1 John ii. 18, 22. iv. 3; 2 John 7.

² Sermon on the Rise of Antichrist.

prophecy, yet the true character of the *Man of Sin* had not, at that early period, had opportunity fully to reveal itself. But it had become evident, long before the controversies, which preceded and accompanied the Reformation, had directed the attention of men to the *real* ANTI-CHRIST. It had become sufficiently evident to Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, who, at the synod of Rheims, which was held in the *tenth* century, appealed to the whole council, whether the Bishop of Rome were not the *anti-christ of the prophets, sitting in the temple of God; and perfectly corresponding to the marks which St Paul had given of him*. In particular, speaking of John the XV., who then governed the Church of Rome, he apostrophized the assembly in these words—" *What think ye, Reverend Fathers, of this man, seated on a lofty throne, and shining in purple and gold? Whom do you account him to be? Surely, if destitute of charity, and puffed up with the pride of science only, HE IS ANTI-CHRIST, sitting in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God²:*" and such is the character which, in the early ages, was attributed universally to *anti-christ*.

Such appears, therefore, to be the sense in which we ought to understand this important prophecy; which we have shewn, both from the structure and chronological order of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, and from the internal evidence of this particular prophecy, it is impossible to apply to *Pagan ROME*; and can only belong to that *spiritual* despotism, of which *Rome* became the centre, after its temporal power was destroyed.

² Usser. de Christian. Eccles. successionem et statu, Cap. II. p. 36. See Bishop Hurd's *Lectures on Prophecy*, Sermon VII.

PART V. SECT. X.

Exultation in Heaven over the fallen Babylon, and upon the approach of the New Jerusalem.

CHAP. XIX. 1—10.

- 1 "AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and
- 2 honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great
- 3 whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And
- 4 again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts
- 5 fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying,
- 6 Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great
- 7 multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God
- 8 omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and
- 9 his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white:
- 10 for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship
- him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

THIS is the sublime and interesting close of the prophecy relating to Babylon, and of the pouring out of the Vial on this great and principal head of the anti-christian apostasy. A heavenly voice, as described in the close of the last chapter, had called upon the inhabitants of heaven to praise God for the final overthrow of the great whore:—"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her!" The glorious scene is now opened to our view. The

inhabitants of heaven begin the triumphant strain; which is taken up by the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts,—those glorified spirits who immediately surround the throne of the Most High,—and praise God for the destruction of his great enemy, repeating the same triumphant song, “Amen; Alleluia!” A voice then proceeds from the throne, and calls upon all, both small and great, to praise God for his true and righteous judgments: upon which the prophet hears “as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” Under the same image of a *marriage*, we find frequently represented in Scripture the holy and mystical union of Christ and his Church. Such it is represented by Isaiah, when, addressing the Gentile Church, he says, “Fear not: for *thy Maker’ is thine husband*: the Lord of Hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel¹.” Such it is represented in that beautiful spiritual allegory, which is contained in the Song of Solomon: and such also it is represented in the forty-fifth Psalm; in which the prophet David, in a song of sublime imagery on the occasion of the marriage of his son Solomon, has represented the spiritual marriage and unity between the Redeemer and his Church. For that this Psalm belongs to the Redeemer, in the highest sense and

¹ Isai. liv. 5.

most sublime acceptation, we have the testimony of St Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews¹: and it is from the numerous beautiful and spiritual applications of this imagery, which are found in the New Testament; and particularly in this, and in the following prophecy of this book, in which the Church of the redeemed, "the holy city, the new Jerusalem," is described as "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" that we are led to the true comprehension of the spiritual meaning of that beautiful allegory, in which, under the image of the royal bride, who is represented as being brought to her husband "in raiment of needle-work and clothing of wrought gold," is represented the presentation of the Church to her Redeemer. Her garments are white, because they had been washed in the blood of her Redeemer; her fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Such is the sublime application of this imagery in this vision of St John. "The harlot, pretending to be the spouse of the Lamb, (chap. xviii. 16.) having been now convicted of fornication with the worldly powers, having been *judged*, and eternally discarded; the attention in heaven and earth is naturally turned to that pure and chaste Virgin, (2 Cor. xi. 2.) who is now presented to her Lord. The choral song brings her to view, arrayed, not 'in purple and scarlet, and gold and precious stones;' not in worldly splendour like the harlot; but in the pure, simple, but resplendent garments, which are the clothing of the heavenly inhabitants. She had 'washed her garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' By faith in her Redeemer she is become righteous: for this is '*the*

¹ Compare Psalm xlv. 6, 7; Hebr. i. 8, 9.

*fine linen, the righteousness of the saints*².” The heavenly voice then concludes with assuring the prophet of the blessedness of those, who shall be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; and of the certainty of fulfilment, which belonged to these promises of God. “And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

Overwhelmed with astonishment and awe at the sublimity and importance of the divine communications, the prophet falls down in humble adoration before the angel who had made them to him. He however refuses this worship, which is thus offered to him; declares himself to be nothing more than one of those honoured instruments, to whom, in conjunction with John, was committed the office of bearing testimony to the Redeemer; and directs him to HIM, who is at once the object of divine worship, and the great subject of prophecy:—“*Worship God: FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY.*”

It is impossible,—on reviewing all the circumstances connected with this prophecy relative to the Apocalyptic Babylon; the solemnity with which the subject of it is introduced; the awful characters under which it is described; its connection with the former prophecies, both of the Old and the New dispensation; the station which it occupies amidst the other interesting and important prophecies of the Apocalypse; the awful display of divine vengeance which accompanies the final overthrow of Babylon; and the rejoicings in heaven which celebrate the establish-

² Woodhouse ad locum.

ment of the Redeemer's kingdom;—not to feel, that in applying it to any *temporal* judgment, which ever visited ancient Rome, we apply it to a subject, which was never contemplated by that Divine Spirit, which directed and inspired the prophecy of St John; and that it cannot be applied to the subject of any *temporal* judgment, without sanctioning a principle, which would degrade the sublime and awful language of ancient prophecy to a level, which is placed far below that, which is acknowledged to be the great subject of all prophecy; and which, in its general application, would rob the promises of God, with regard to the future prospects of his Church, of all their value, and deprive faith of its most glorious and delightful anticipations.

PART V. SECT. XI.

The Lord descends to Battle and Victory. The Conflict and the Victory over the Wild Beast and his false Prophet.

XIX. 11—21.

- 11 "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in
 12 righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.
 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his
 14 name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in
 15 fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the
 16 winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING
 17 OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather
 18 yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That

ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings 19 of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And 20 the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain 21 with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

WE are now arrived at the point, to which the preceding prophecies have been some time leading us, the final destruction and overthrow of the anti-christian powers. In chap. xvii. 4, it was declared by the angel with respect to the ten kings, the ministers of the Beast, that "they should make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb should overcome them, for he is LORD OF LORDS and KING OF KINGS; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." He is represented, therefore, in this vision, as appearing to complete his triumph. Heaven opens, and, behold, a white horse. It is the same white horse which we saw at the opening of the first Seal, whose rider went forth conquering and to conquer¹. He now appears again to achieve his final victory over his enemies. He appears in the same awful and majestic characters, in which he is represented in other parts of Scripture, and in the preceding visions of this prophecy². "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns," the emblems of victory and of triumph. "He had a name written that no man knew, but he himself³;" that name which was declared by the

¹ Chap. vi. 2.² Compare chap. i.³ Compare chap. ii. 17.

Prophet Isaiah to be "WONDERFUL," "the name which is above every name¹." "He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood, and out of his mouth went a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Such was he represented by the Prophet David; and such also by the Prophet Isaiah, when he describes him as coming from the destruction of his enemies, with his raiment stained with blood, *glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatness of his strength*². Such he also appears in this place, where he is described as coming forth against the Beast, and the kings of the earth, and the false prophet, who are gathered together against him to battle; who are overwhelmed with instantaneous destruction, and consigned to the burning flame.

This sublime passage appears to combine in itself all the other prophecies which are contained in the preceding chapters, with regard to the final overthrow of the great anti-christian apostasy, and the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom³. These passages appear all of them to imply, that great and awful events will precede and accompany this blessed period of peace and glory to the world: and the same thing appears also to be implied in those prophecies of the Old Testament, which look to the same consummation; and which all of them lead us to suppose, that the blessed period of the Messiah's reign will be ushered in with great and

¹ Isai. ix. 6; Phil. ii. 9; Judg. xiii. 18.

² Psalm ii. 9; Rev. ii. 27; xii. 5; Isai. lxiii. 1—6.

³ Chap. xi. 13—19; xiv. 14—20; xvi.

awful convulsions upon the earth, and particularly with the most terrible judgments to be inflicted on the enemies of the truth. Such appears to be the necessary import of the sublime imagery which is employed by the Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joel, and Zechariah, with reference to these events⁴. For that the prophecy, which is contained in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel relative to Gog and Magog, is to be applied to this period, appears to be evident, as has been before observed, from the circumstance, of the events contained in it being connected with the restoration of the Jews, which will certainly *precede* the Millennium; and therefore cannot, as some writers have supposed, relate to the same events which are recorded in the following chapter of this book; and which belong to the period *succeeding* the Millennium, when Satan shall be again loosed out of his prison⁵. In the interpretation of the highly figurative language contained in these prophecies, we must be careful not to press it too closely, in attempting to define the particular judgments which are described in them. Great light may be thrown upon the prophecies, both of the Old Testament and of the Apocalypse, by a diligent comparison of them together, and a careful attention to the spirit and meaning of the language which is employed by them; and sufficient to assure us of what is the great object

⁴ Compare Isai. xxxiv. lxiii. 1—6. xxiv. xxvii. xxxiv. xxxv.: and Mr W. Lowth's Prefaces to chapters xxiv. xxxiv; Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix; Dan. vii. 9—14, 26, 27; Joel iii; Zech. xiv; also Bishop Lowth de Sacr. Poësi Hebr. *Lecture* xx.

⁵ Mede, Bishop Newton, and Scott,

are of opinion that the prophecy contained in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel, is to be referred to the same period with this particular prophecy of the Apocalypse. Archbishop Newcome, Faber, and others, are of opinion that it relates to the same events which are recorded in ch. xx. 7—10.

of these prophecies,—the entire destruction of those great anti-christian apostasies, which have for so many ages desolated and destroyed the Christian world; and the final establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in glory and in power.

PART VI.

Satan bound. The Millennium. Satan loosed, deceiveth the nations, and is cast into the burning lake.

CHAP. XX. 1—10.

1 "AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the
2 key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And
he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the
3 Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast
him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal
upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till
the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must
4 be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon
them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls
of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the
word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither
his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads,
or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a
5 thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until
the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.
6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:
on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be
priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thou-
7 sand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan
8 shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive
the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog
and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of
9 whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the
breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints
about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God
10 out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that de-
ceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,
where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tor-
mented day and night for ever and ever."

THERE are three subjects of great importance contained in this passage:

1. *First*, the binding of Satan.

2. The Millennium.

3. The loosing of Satan again, with power to deceive the nations; after which he is finally cast into the burning lake.

1. With regard to the subject of the first part of the visions contained in this passage, we may observe that the last vision represented to us the final overthrow of the great anti-christian confederacy; and exhibited to us the beast and the false prophet, the great instruments of the dragon in deceiving the nations, cast alive into the lake of fire. The great dragon himself, that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,—who first tempted our first parents to sin, and, since that time, has been the continual enemy of the peace and happiness of mankind,—is at length cast into the lake of fire, that place which God hath “prepared for the devil and his angels;” and in which he “hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day¹.” An angel, therefore, appears from heaven, deriving his commission and his power from Him who “hath the keys of hell and of death,” who “shutteth and no man openeth²,” and “having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.” “By his permission, the bottomless pit had been opened: by his power it is now closed and sealed. The author

¹ Jude 6.

² Chap. i. 18. iii. 7.

of all iniquity is confined in it, for a time; after which he is permitted to come forth again for a season, and to deceive the nations. But *the beasts* rise up no more. They are no longer the successful agents of Satan. He is no longer permitted to enjoy this kind of civil and religious tyranny against true religion and the happiness of man. The blissful season, during which Satan continues bounden, is called a thousand years¹." From the time that he had been permitted to exercise his power in the world, he had produced nothing but sin, and misery, and irreligion amongst men. We may, therefore, reasonably, when Satan is confined in his infernal prison, look forward to a season of great prosperity and peace to the Christian Church; when religion shall be triumphant, and the blessed influence of Christianity shall be universal.

2. The *second* subject mentioned in this passage, is the *Millennium*; during which period, "those, who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," are raised from the dead, and are permitted "to live and reign with Christ a thousand years."

There is no passage in the whole of Scripture, which has given greater scope to the researches and the speculations of the learned than this. When we consider that it relates to a period, which is confessedly *future*, and to a state of things which does not appear to be connected with this world, it becomes us to form our opinions respecting it with great humility; and perhaps it will be thought, that

¹ Woodhouse.

that opinion, which differs least from the obvious meaning of the words themselves, is the best¹. Such appears to be that of Dean Woodhouse, who has given the following view of the passage, in connection with the other passages of Scripture, in which the same doctrine appears to be contained. "In Daniel vii. 22—26," he observes, "the judgment sits; judgment is given to the saints; they possess the kingdom." The consideration of this passage in Daniel, in connection with the passage before us, is of great importance, because, as we have seen, it is closely connected with all these prophecies of the Apocalypse. The war which is represented as being carried on by the little horn against the saints, is prophetic of the trials, which, under the Papal apostasy, for so many ages have been carried on against the true Church of God; which, it is declared, *shall be given into the hand of the little horn until time, and times, and dividing of time*. But it is declared, that *the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him*². This judgment is clearly distinct from the general judgment, and is either preliminary to, or coincident with that universal extension of the kingdom of the Redeemer;

¹ It is the observation of Mede, that "the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, of all the narrations of that book, seems to be the most plain and simple, most free of allegory, and of the involution of prophetic figures; only here and there sprinkled with such

metaphors as the use of speech makes equipollent to vulgar expressions, or the former narrations in that book had made to be as words personal or proper names are in the plainest histories, as *old serpent, beast, &c.*" *Works*, p. 943. ² Dan. vii. 26, 27.

wherein it is foretold, that *the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High*. It appears, therefore, to have reference to the same period of the Christian Church, which is alluded to in this passage of the Apocalypse, in which both the dragon and his ministers will be cast into their infernal prison. "To this passage of Daniel, St Paul seems to allude in 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, as well as does our Lord's promise in Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30, giving thrones of judgment to his disciples. These prophecies," Dean Woodhouse continues, "dark in themselves, until the event and completion shall illustrate them, are here repeated with some additional information; for it is affirmed, that this reign of the saints shall continue 'a thousand years.' Who the saints are, is at first expressed in very general terms, as also is the prophecy of Daniel. '*They* sate; judgment was given to *them*.' But among those who sit upon these thrones, are afterwards expressly enumerated they, who during the long conflict with the beast and the false prophet, have kept the faith, even unto death; and refused the idolatrous worship to which they were tempted or forced by the worldly powers. These faithful sons and champions of the Church are described as living and reigning with the Anointed or Christ, *the thousand years*. And this early or first resurrection appears to be their exclusive privilege, and not to belong to the rest of the dead, who, it is said, shall not live until the thousand years be completed¹."

This appears to be the most obvious purport of this mysterious passage. The peculiar privilege,

¹ Woodhouse ad locum.

which is here promised to those, who have been more particularly distinguished either in holiness or in their sufferings for the truth, of a prior resurrection, is in perfect harmony with the general doctrine of Scripture; that those, who are most distinguished in holiness, will be distinguished by the greater glory of their reward. Such is the doctrine of the prophet Daniel, that *they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever*^a; and such is the doctrine which appears to be implied in those passages, to which we have lately alluded. And it is more particularly confirmed by the examples of those eminent servants of God, Enoch and Elijah; both of whom were translated immediately to heaven without seeing death^b; and *also* by the *mysterious* circumstances attending the Transfiguration; in which Moses and Elijah appear to have been distinguished by a peculiar privilege, when they “appeared with our Lord in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” But, moreover, that those, who have been more particularly distinguished by their labours and sufferings in the service of their Divine Master, will meet with a more distinguished portion of glory hereafter, appears to be evident from some other passages of this book. For in the vision, which is contained in the fifth Seal, in which “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held,” are represented as calling out from under the altar for vengeance on their persecutors, it is said, that “white robes were given unto every

^a Dan. xii. 3.^b Gen. v. 24; 2 Kings ii. 2.

one of them; and it was said unto them, *that they should rest yet for a season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that shall be killed as they were, should be fulfilled*: and they are afterwards described in the fourteenth chapter, as appearing with the Lamb on mount Sion, and joining in the praises of the heavenly hosts at the prospective downfall of the great anti-christian apostasies. With respect, therefore, to the belief, that the martyrs may be admitted to the privilege of a prior resurrection; there is nothing inconsistent, either with the general tenor of Scripture doctrine, or with the particular revelations contained in this book,—that they, who have been more particularly distinguished by their labours and their sufferings in the service of their Divine Master, should take precedence of the other favoured servants of the Redeemer, both in the *time* of their admission to the perfect happiness of heaven, as well as in the superior glories of their reward.

3. But after the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will be again loosed out of his prison; and a new and general apostasy will take place, in which the nations from the four corners of the earth, will be engaged; and which will be completely overthrown by a sudden and tremendous judgment from heaven; after which, Satan, who deceived them, will be consigned for ever to his eternal prison.

With regard to the particular character of this apostasy, and of the parties who will be engaged in it; in a prophecy which confessedly relates to the *latter days*, and to a period following the Millennium, and quite at the close of the divine

dispensations, it is impossible that we can pretend to pronounce a definite opinion, or presume to be wise above what is written. It is probably, as we have already observed, to be distinguished from the prophecy relating to Gog and Magog, which is contained in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel. Whatever be the nature of this conspiracy against the Church of God, we are assured that it will be defeated by the power and vengeance of the Almighty; and that the great Author of all this evil, will be "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the false prophet are, and will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Such appears to be the general purport of the prophecy contained in this chapter. But it would be improper to pass it over, without some allusion to the different opinions with regard to the Millennium, which have been advanced by different persons; though it is impossible that we can enter at length into the examination of a subject so extensive. (1) With regard to those who refer the Millennium to a period following the early establishment of Christianity; "nothing," as Bishop Newton has observed, "can be more evident, than that this prophecy of the Millennium and of the first resurrection, hath not yet been fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken in a figurative sense. For reckon the thousand years with Usher from the time of Christ; or reckon them with Grotius (and, we may add, Hammond,) from the time of Constantine; yet neither of these periods, nor indeed any other, will answer the description and character of the Millennium, the purity and peace, the happiness

and holiness of that blessed state." (2) With regard to the opinion, which was maintained by many of the early Fathers, of the actual resurrection of the martyrs, and of their spiritual reign with Christ upon earth during the period of the thousand years, it is admitted by Irenæus, who argues in support of this doctrine, that it was not generally received in the Christian Church; and there were many in the early ages of Christianity, who, offended at the many abuses which had been engrafted on the doctrine, were strongly opposed to it¹. There is nothing, however, to be collected from this passage, (which appears directly to assert the resurrection of the martyrs, and their spiritual reign with Christ during the thousand years,) to confirm the belief, that it will be fulfilled in an *earthly* reign; and the general doctrine of Scripture is directly opposed to any *visible* appearance of the Redeemer *upon earth*, till that awful day, when he shall appear upon earth as the Judge of the living and the dead². (3) The opinion of those writers is more judicious, who look for a spiritual fulfilment of this prophecy. Whether it be that of Dr Whitby, who explains it of "the reign of the converted Jews and of the Gentiles flowing in to them;" or of those persons, who, interpreting the passage in the same manner that they do that of the witnesses mentioned in the eleventh chapter, explain it of the spiritual resurrection of the departed saints and martyrs, who, like Elijah in the person of John the Baptist, and David in that of Christ, will live again in the per-

¹ See Whitby's *Treatise on the Millennium*, Chap. I.: and compare Irenæus, Lib. v. cap. 34, 35.

² See Whitby, *On the Millennium*, Chaps. III, IV.

sons of other saints, and thus contribute to that happy state of things, which, we are led to believe, will constitute the happiness of the millennial state³. This opinion, however, considered with regard to the literal construction of this passage, is not altogether free from difficulty, even as it is set forth by its ablest and most learned advocates. We are taught by prophecy to look forward to a blessed time, when the religion of the Redeemer will be universal, and when "the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea:" and this effect will be the united consequence of the chaining of Satan, and the more visible and evident interference of the Redeemer's power upon earth. The opinion, which has been advanced above, with respect to the earlier resurrection of the martyrs and of those who have been most distinguished for their labours and sufferings for the truth, and of their admission to more distinguished privileges and rewards in the heavenly state, is not only agreeable to the general doctrine of Scripture on this subject; but it is also free from the objections, which may be reasonably urged against the supposition of the visible appearance of Christ upon earth during the Millennium. And without attempting a more particular explanation of unfulfilled prophecy, it is sufficient for us to be assured,—what may be clearly collected from this passage,—that a happy and triumphant state of religion will succeed to this present chequered scene of things; and that the power of the great enemy of God and man will be finally and entirely destroyed⁴.

³ See a learned and judicious statement and defence of this opinion, in Simeon's *Horæ Homileticæ*, Vol. XXI. pp. 237—44.

⁴ See the note in the Appendix.

PART VII. SECT. I.

The Judgment and the General Resurrection.

XX. 11—15.

- 11 "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it,
 from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there
 12 was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and
 great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and
 another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the
 dead were judged out of those things which were written in
 13 the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up
 the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up
 the dead which were in them: and they were judged every
 14 man according to their works. And death and hell were cast
 15 into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever
 was not found written in the book of life was cast into the
 lake of fire.

THE prophet, having brought to a close all the wonderful dispensations, which form the subject of this sublime prophecy; and having described the final destruction of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, and all the other enemies of God; proceeds, in conclusion, to give a description of the general judgment; in which He, who, in the beginning of this prophecy, is described as appearing under circumstances of ineffable majesty and tenderness, to give his commission, as the great Prophet of the Christian Church, to his chosen disciple and Evangelist St John; and who has been manifested under the same character throughout this prophecy, as directing, controuling, and governing the affairs of his Church; and, finally, overwhelming his enemies with destruction, and casting them into the lake of fire and brimstone, where they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;—appears now in

that awful character, with which he is invested, as the reward of his humiliation and sufferings, of the Judge of the living and the dead, from whose face heaven and earth shall flee away. *For the Father, as our Lord himself has told us, judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son; to whom also he hath given authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man*¹; “not simply,” as Bishop Pearson has observed, “because he is a man, therefore he shall be Judge, (for then by the same reason every man should judge, and consequently none, because no man could be judged, if every man should only judge,) but because of the three Persons which are God, he only is also the Son of Man; and therefore for his affinity with their nature, for his appearance to their eyes, most fit to represent the greatest mildness and sweetness of equity, in the severity of that just and irrespective judgment.” The same circumstances of greatness and of humiliation, of tenderness and of terror, which are associated with all our ideas of our Redeemer, and which pervade all the representations of Him, which are given in this book, appear eminently in this last and most awful scene; in which He appears as the terrible Judge of mankind, from whose face heaven and earth flee away; and in which all mankind, both small and great, are represented as appearing before his awful throne to give account of their lives. They are peculiarly calculated to raise the feelings of awe, with which we contemplate the character of Him, who is at once the Author of our faith and the Finisher of our salvation; our Saviour, our Lord, and our God;

¹ John v. 22, 27.

² Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. vii.

and to make us regard with devout attention and reverential awe, that wonderful scheme of prophecy, which contains the history of his merciful dispensations for the happiness and salvation of men.

PART VII. SECT. II.

The New Jerusalem.

CHAPS. XXI. XXII. 1—5.

- 1 "AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first
heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was
- 2 no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,
coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride
- 3 adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of
heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,
and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people,
- 4 and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And
God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall
be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall
there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
- 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things
new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true
- 6 and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha
and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him
- 7 that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He
that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God,
- 8 and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and
the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sor-
cerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the
lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the
- 9 second death. And there came unto me one of the seven
angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues,
and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the
- 10 bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit
to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city,
the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,
- 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone
12 most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal; And
had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the
gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are
- 13 the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On
the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south

three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

THE last vision exhibited to us the great and awful close of the divine dispensations, in which the Redeemer himself appears, as the Judge of the living

and the dead; before whose face heaven and earth flee away. The next, and the concluding vision of this mysterious book, represents the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, descending from heaven, arrayed in heavenly splendour, "as a bride prepared for her husband." But before we enter upon a more particular examination of this interesting scene; it will enable us to comprehend more clearly the spirit and the meaning of this passage, if we consider the particular sense, in which it is to be understood; whether as representing a more pure and spiritual state of the Christian Church upon earth, or as exhibiting to us, in delightful vision, the state of the Church triumphant in heaven. The latter appears, at first sight, to be the more probable import of the vision; because it follows immediately after the description of the General Judgment; which, we believe, will conclude the Almighty dispensations, as far as they are connected with this present world. But perhaps a more accurate examination of the passage itself, and a comparison of it with those parts of the prophecies of the Old Testament, from which the sublime and varied imagery of this vision appears to be principally borrowed, will lead us to believe, that it partakes of that peculiar characteristic, which has been described as belonging to so large a portion of ancient prophecy; in which are shadowed forth, under images borrowed from earthly objects, the glories of heaven and the spiritual character of the Church of the Redeemed upon earth. This perhaps will more particularly appear, if we compare it with the concluding chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah, and with the vision of the Temple, which is contained in the concluding chapters of the prophecy of

Ezekiel; with which the imagery of this vision bears a close and accurate resemblance in all its parts.

In the first place, with regard to the vision of the Temple which is the subject of the concluding chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel; we have seen, that the intention of this vision was probably, at the same time that it served as a guide to the Jews in rebuilding the Temple on their return to the promised land, to describe, under images derived from the earthly Temple, the state of religion in the Christian Church towards the close of the divine dispensations; with a farther view to that glorious state of things in the Church triumphant in heaven, which is the principal subject of the present chapter. In the same manner, with regard to those prophecies which constitute the concluding part of the prophecy of Isaiah; what is called the *double sense* of prophecy, appears, in a peculiar manner, to pervade this part of that sublime book, which seems to rise in sublimity, as it draws nearer towards the close; and as, under the description of the redemption of the Jewish people from the Babylonish captivity, is shadowed forth the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, so under the renewed state of the earth under the full reign of the Gospel dispensation, is shadowed forth that new and happy state of things, which, we are led to believe, will succeed to the present world, when it shall be replaced by those "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The sublime imagery which pervades this and other parts of the prophecy of Isaiah, (and the same may be said of a great portion of ancient prophecy,) in which the future prospects of the Church are set forth, absolutely forbids our limiting it either to the

fates and fortunes of the Jewish people in any subsequent stage of the divine dispensations, or even to the most glorious condition of the Christian Church in this world; but must lead us to look, for a more complete fulfilment, to that blessed state of things which will be accomplished in the next world, when the righteous will realize all the delightful anticipations of the glories and the happiness of eternity; and in the full sense of the sublime description, will "come unto mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel¹."

The same character appears to belong to this vision of the Apocalypse: and that it relates, in the first instance at least, to that blessed state of the Church triumphant upon earth, which we believe will follow the overthrow of the great apostasies, appears to be conclusively shewn by Vitringa, from a comparison of it with the preceding vision; in which, under the figurative description of the marriage of the Lamb, is represented the glorious state of religion, when the power of the great enemy of God and man shall be destroyed. But it appears impossible to limit it to this application; and the sublime imagery of the vision, which, in some particulars, far exceeds our most sanguine ideas of the most prosperous state of religion in this world, teaches

¹ Hebr. xii. 22—24.

us that we must look for its ultimate and complete fulfilment in that blessed state, in which *God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.* In this respect, it appears to partake of the nature of a *double* prophecy, like that of Isaiah, from which so much of the imagery is borrowed. Nor is there any thing inconsistent in this application of a prophecy, forming part of a system, which itself professes to point out the fulfilment of former prophecies, and to exhibit the concluding scene of the mysterious dispensations of God. Because this particular prophecy relates to events, which, in whatever point of view they are considered, are yet future; and, therefore, may be expected to exhibit all the peculiar features of unfulfilled prophecy. This,—so far from being an objection, either to this particular prophecy, considered as constituting a *part* of a grand scheme, of which the great end and object is the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom, or to the divine character of the book itself which contains it,—is an additional argument in its favour; and, in the harmony which it exhibits with former prophecies, affords an evidence of peculiar weight in support of the divine character of prophecy under both dispensations. But, moreover, this prophecy, in this application of it, displays a remarkable uniformity with the preceding prophecies of this book, in which we have seen that *later* prophecies are frequently explanatory of those which *precede* them; and in the sublime and affecting picture which it presents of the glories and happiness of the later period of the Gospel dispensation, affords a remarkable confirmation of

those brief, but satisfactory assurances, which are given in former prophecies, of the complete and glorious triumphs of the Gospel even in this world; —at the same time that it directs our attention to that blessed state, in which all these hopes and prospects will be realized in their fullest perfection, in the happiness and glory of eternity.

It will be important to establish the truth of these observations, by an examination of the prophecy itself.

1. In the first place, then, in the opening of the vision, the prophet describes himself as beholding “a new heaven and a new earth.” Now, although this expression *may* relate, as it sometimes does¹, to the great change which will take place on the dissolution of this present material globe; yet it is in other passages of the ancient prophets, expressive of those great changes which will take place in the moral world, in that flourishing and triumphant state of the Church, which we believe will prevail before the great consummation of all things. Such is evidently the sense in which it is used by Isaiah*. In the same manner, with regard to the spiritual or “heavenly Jerusalem,” which the prophet “beheld coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;” it is not only used in this book, (as it is also, besides this passage, in the nineteenth chapter,) as descriptive of that renewed state of the Christian Church, which all prophecy leads us to look forward to, but the same is also the continual language of the ancient prophets: and it is also the view of St Paul, who expressly contrasts with the *earthly* Jerusalem, which was “in bondage with

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 13.

² Isai. Lxv. 17—25.

her children," "the *heavenly* Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all;" even that spiritual Church, which would be enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles into it³. The expressions also, which follow, of "God dwelling amongst men⁴;" of his "wiping away all tears from their eyes⁵;" of his "giving to him that is athirst of the water of life freely⁶;" of his being "the God of the children of men, and of their being his children⁷;" are all used in the language of ancient prophecy with regard to that happy condition of things, which will accompany the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth. But, both in the language of ancient prophecy, and more particularly in this sublime passage of the Apocalypse, they evidently look to a more complete fulfilment in that blessed state, in which, in the fullest sense of the expression, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying;" and in which the righteous shall behold for ever the immediate presence of their Redeemer and their God⁸.

2. Secondly, with regard to the vision which is exhibited to the Apostle, of the New Jerusalem, he describes himself as being carried away in the spirit by the angel to a great and high mountain, where he saw "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Such also was the privilege which was vouchsafed to Ezekiel, when "the hand of the Lord was upon him, and, in the visions of God, brought him into the

³ Compare Isai. lii. 1—10. Liv. 1, and the chapter throughout. Gal iv. 25, 26.

⁴ Lev. xxvi. 11, 12; Ezek. xxxvi. 26—28; 2 Cor. vi. 16; John xiv. 23; Rev. vii. 15.

⁵ Isai. xxv. 6—8. xxxv. 10.

⁶ Isai. xii. 3. Lv. 1; John iv. 10—14. vii. 31.

⁷ Zech. viii. 8.

⁸ The chapters of Isaiah from chap. xxv. to chap. xxvii. inclusive, afford a most interesting example of this union of the double sense of prophecy.

land of Israel, and set him upon a very high mountain," and exhibited to him the vision of the holy city¹. Vitringa supposes the angel, who exhibits this vision to St John, to be the same with that, who had exhibited the mystical Babylon to him in the wilderness. He now exhibits the Church, the bride of Christ, clothed in heavenly beauty and splendour: and the description which he gives of this splendid vision, of which the subject is the heavenly Jerusalem, the bride and the spouse of the Lamb, adorned in all her magnificence, and richness, and beauty of decoration, is worthy of the sublime object; which comprehends, in its full perfection, every thing which the prophets have said with regard to the purity, the excellence, and the glories of the Church of the Redeemer². The vision of the city, which was exhibited to Ezekiel, as we have observed, at the same time that it was intended to afford to the Jewish people a model for the re-building of the Temple, and to prescribe rules for the regulation of their worship, as well as to give them an assurance of their return to their own land, and of the re-establishment of their religion,—had also a farther view to that universal extension of religion, which the word of prophecy assures us will prevail, when the true Church will be enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles into it, and both Jews and Gentiles shall be gathered together into one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. This, as it appeared is evident from some parts of it, which evidently have a spiritual meaning in view, and from others, which will not admit of a literal interpretation³. But the description which St John has given of the

¹ Ezek. xl. 1, 2.² Vitringa, pp. 893, 4.³ See above, pp. 23, 24.

heavenly Jerusalem, rises far beyond this in sublimity and splendour; and combines all the most glorious images, which have been used by former prophets, in speaking of the Christian Church, with all the other beauties which it derives from its own peculiar character as a Christian prophecy, and, therefore, exhibiting a nearer and a more spiritual view of the future and eternal glories of the Redeemer's kingdom.

1. In the first place, the city is described as "having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone, most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as chrystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel: And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." In like manner, the city which was exhibited to Ezekiel, had a wall, and twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel⁴. But how inferior was it in glory to that which was exhibited in vision to St John, "having the glory of God, and with its wall built on twelve foundations, which had in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb;"—symbolical of that "salvation," which God will "appoint" to his Church "for walls and bulwarks," and of that strength, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail; which is "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone⁵."

2. The angel, then, "with a golden reed⁶, pro-

⁴ Ezek. xl. 5. Ib. xlviii. 31—34.

⁵ Isai. xxvi. 1. lx. 18; Matt. xvi. 18; Ephes. ii. 20.

⁶ Comp. Ezek. xl. 3.

ceeded to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel." The whole of this description is evidently mystical¹: and so also is that which follows, with regard to the splendour and beauty of the building; which appears to be borrowed from a parallel passage of Isaiah, in which he describes the future glories of the Christian Church, the new Jerusalem, and at the same time adds the spiritual meaning of this gorgeous description of its resplendent beauty:—"Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. *And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children*."

3. The prophet then proceeds in the description of this splendid vision: "and I saw," he observes, "no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This will be the peculiar glory of the Millennial Church, that the whole Church will be the temple of God and of the Lamb²; and that light, which only dwelt *typically* in the earthly sanctuary, will dwell *really* amongst

¹ See Doddridge ad locum.

² Isai. liv. 11—13.

³ Comp. John iv. 21—24.

men; so that the Church will really behold the fulfilment of the promise which God made by the Prophet Isaiah: *The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory*⁴. Moreover, Isaiah, prophesying of the future glories of the Church of the Redeemer, had declared, that *the glory of the Lord should rise upon it,—that, though darkness should cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, yet that the Lord should rise upon her, and the glory of the Lord should be seen upon her: and that the Gentiles should come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising*⁵;—that *the sons of strangers should build up her walls, and their kings should minister unto her; that her gates should be open continually; they should not be shut day nor night; that men might bring unto them the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings might be brought*⁶;—that *into the holy city, the new Jerusalem, there should no more come the uncircumcised and the unclean*⁷. St John, in the full spirit of Christian prophecy, declares of the pure and glorious Church of the Redeemer, the heavenly Jerusalem, that *the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour unto it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory, and the honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh*

⁴ Isai. lx. 19.⁶ Ib. lx. 10, 11.⁵ Ib. lx. 1—3.⁷ Ib. lii. 1.

a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

4. The beauty and the glory of the heavenly Jerusalem has been already exhibited to the prophet under the figure of a bride, arrayed in heavenly splendour, adorned for her husband; and of a city, all-glorious in celestial light, descending from heaven. It is now exhibited to him under images drawn from the earthly Paradise, the faint resemblances of the never-failing blessings and glories of the Paradise of God. *And he shewed me, says the prophet, a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Under the same image was the future progress of the Gospel represented to Ezekiel, when, in his vision, he beheld the waters issuing forth from under the eastern porch of the Temple, and carrying healing and life with them in their course; and *by the river upon the bank thereof, upon this side and upon that side, it was declared that there should grow all trees for meat, whose leaf should not fade, neither should the fruit thereof be consumed: it should bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof should be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine*¹. Under the same image also was it foretold by Joel, when he declared that *waters should go forth of the house of the Lord, and water the valley of Shittim*; and

¹ Ezek. xlvii. 1—12.

by Zechariah, that "*living waters should go forth from Jerusalem: And the Lord should be king over all the earth: and in that day there should be one Lord, and his name one*²." Under these lively and affecting images were shadowed forth to the prophets of old the future mercies of the Gospel dispensation. But St John, to whom was vouchsafed a nearer view of the mysteries of redemption, beheld the river of life proceeding *immediately* from the throne of God and of the Lamb; and the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and whose *fruit* is able to nourish the faithful believer to eternal life. In that blessed state, in which the religion of the Redeemer will reign triumphant upon earth, and the power of the great enemy of God and man will be confined to his infernal prison, the sublime anticipations of prophecy, with regard to the blessings and the triumphs of the Gospel, will be realized as far as they can be on this side eternity. In that state *there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.*

Such then is the description which we derive from a comparison of this sublime and interesting prophecy, with the corresponding prophecies of the Old Testament, of the future glories and triumphs of the Gospel upon earth,—bearing all the marks of a Christian prophecy, which the ancient prophecies

² Joel iii. 18; Zech. xiv. 8, 9.

do of belonging to the former dispensation; and reflecting the light of that better and more spiritual dispensation to which it belongs. But the station which it occupies in this book, no less than the language and the spirit of the prophecy itself,—which cannot be satisfied by any condition of religion, however prosperous, in this world,—evidently points to some higher fulfilment in that blessed state, when the frame of this visible world shall be replaced by *new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness*. As was remarked in the beginning of this prophecy, the language which is used with regard to the new heavens and new earth; the presence of God and of the Lamb in that blissful state; the splendour of the heavenly city; the removal of every curse; the eternal banishment of sin and sorrow from that state of perfect happiness; and the glorious light in which the righteous shall dwell and reign for evermore; rising far beyond the most sublime ideas which we can conceive of any future triumphs of religion in this world; evidently direct our thoughts to those glorious and eternal rewards which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him*¹; and to that blessed state, in which those who *have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall be before the throne of God, and shall serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; and they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them,*

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

*and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*².

These sublime ideas with regard to the happiness of the righteous, as well as the awful punishments which are denounced against the wicked, *in the lake that burneth fire and brimstone, which is the second death*, evidently direct our views of this prophecy, in its complete and ultimate fulfilment, to the rewards and the punishments of eternity. But still the vision of *the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*,—which, in *one* passage of this book, is applied to the Church of Christ triumphant upon earth³, and, in *another*, is promised as a reward to the faithful in heaven⁴; and other expressions in this chapter, which seem to unite the most sublime ideas, which we are able to collect from other passages of Scripture, with regard to the future triumphs and glories of the religion of the Redeemer upon earth, and its final and perfect consummation in the regions of the blessed⁵, appear evidently to point to a *double* fulfilment. Such a view of this prophecy appears to be rendered necessary by a consideration of all the circumstances connected with it: and, at the same time that it gives a peculiar interest to this sublime vision, it casts an additional and an interesting light over the spiritual character of ancient prophecy.

Dean Woodhouse, and the majority of commentators, consider that this vision is applicable *only* to the glories of the heavenly state. But, as we have seen, both the corresponding prophecies of the Old

² Chap. vii. 14—17.

⁴ Chap. iii. 12.

³ Chap. xix. 6—8.

⁵ Comp. xxi. 22—27.

Testament, from which the imagery of this vision is principally borrowed, as well the internal evidence of the prophecy itself, appear to forbid our limiting it to this application: and we have a similar instance of this union of different subjects in our Saviour's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem¹. We are all able to appreciate the wonderful sublimity and power, with which our Saviour, in this prophecy, has united the description of the terrors which would accompany that awful event with the still greater terrors which will accompany the day of judgment; and how eminently the figurative description of our Saviour appearing in the judgments, which he denounced against his guilty people, was calculated to raise the minds of his disciples to that tremendous day, when he shall appear in visible majesty, *sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*. In the same manner, with regard to the sublime prophecy, which is the subject of this vision; this view of it,—which thus connects together the greatest triumphs of the Gospel in this world with its final consummation in the glories and the happiness of eternity,—supplies faith with the most powerful motives, and adds the most animating encouragement to holiness; and, at the same time that it raises our thoughts to the contemplation of those triumphs, which await the Gospel, even in this world, it teaches us to look forward to those everlasting rewards, which are prepared for the righteous at God's right hand for evermore.

Grotius and Hammond would apply the prophecy contained in this chapter, as well as that in chap. xix. 6—9, to the flourishing state of religion after

¹ Matt. xxiv.

the accession of Constantine to the Imperial throne. It is, however, impossible not to remark, with reference to this interpretation, what has been before observed with regard to similar opinions of these eminent commentators concerning other parts of this prophecy,—that it is directly opposed to the plain and obvious meaning of the language, which is employed by the Apostle, and to the whole scope and object of the Apocalyptic prophecies.

PART VII. SECT. III.

The Conclusion.

XXII. 6—21.

“And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: 6
and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew
unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Be- 7
hold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings
of the prophecy of this book. And I John saw these things, 8
and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down
to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these
things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am 9
thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of
them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And 10
he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this
book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be 11
unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and
he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is
holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and 12
my reward is with me, to give every man according as his
work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and 13
the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his
commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, 14
and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without 15
are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers,
and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus 16
have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the
churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the
bright and morning-star. And the Spirit and the bride say, 17
Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him

that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the
18 water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth
the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall
add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues
19 that are written in this book: And if any man shall take
away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall
take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy
20 city, and from the things which are written in this book. He
which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.
21 Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

IN a manner so solemn and awful is this sublime and interesting prophecy brought to its close! It *opened* with a solemn blessing on all who should hear and read it: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.* It *closes* with the same blessing on all who *keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book.* "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things that must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the First and the Last. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you, these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take

of the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." Nothing can be more solemn and affecting than this. The same Divine Person, who had before appeared, under such circumstances of unspeakable awe and majesty in the opening of this prophecy, to give his commission to his faithful prophet and apostle St John, and who has been manifested during the course of it, first, as leading his Church to victory, and, lastly, as completing his triumph over all his enemies—THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS;—now appears, in its close, to call the devout attention of believers to *the sayings of the prophecy of this book*; and he reveals himself under those characters, which are so eminently calculated to obtain attention and reverence, as *the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the First and the Last*. When Daniel received his prophecy relative to the same events, he was commanded to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end;" because, before the events should come to pass, "many should run to and fro, and knowledge should be increased." St John is commanded "*not* to seal the sayings of

¹ Dan. xii. 4, 9.

the prophecy of this book: because the time is at hand,"—the time when the mysterious purposes of God, with regard to the great scheme of man's redemption, shall have their final and glorious accomplishment. To this blessed event every faithful believer will direct his most anxious thoughts; watching, with an interest proportioned to its unspeakable importance, the *means* by which the Father of mercies is accomplishing his gracious purposes for the salvation of mankind; and looking forward, with ardent faith and lively hope, to the final triumph of the religion of the Redeemer over all the powers of darkness. The final issue of this great contest between the designs of the great enemy of souls and the merciful purposes of God for the salvation of men, is an event which no religious person can view with indifference. In proportion to the interest which he feels in his own salvation, in the same degree will he regard with the most lively gratitude every stage in the progress to that glorious consummation, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*; and amidst the darkness, which must encompass even our clearest views in *this* world, he looks forward, with the most ardent expectation and the most lively interest, to that blessed state, in which it will be one of the especial privileges of the saints in light to be admitted to a nearer view of the wonderful mercies of redemption, and to know and adore the great Author and Finisher of their salvation to endless ages. Whatever privilege, above the rest of mankind, the inspired writer of this book might have enjoyed in being admitted to these divine revela-

tions, and in being made the instrument of their communication to the world; yet with respect to the great purport of the mysterious prophecies which are contained in this book, the humblest Christian, in the present day, has more opportunities of judging than even the chosen servant of the Redeemer, who was selected as the instrument of these revelations. In these respects, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater" even than this favoured Apostle. Under the overpowering interest of these sublime revelations St John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed him these things. But he was directed to HIM, who is himself the great Author of these revelations, and the great subject of prophecy. May these considerations preserve *us* from *indifference* at least, much more from profaneness and ridicule, in the consideration of the mysterious subjects of this prophecy! The divine and blessed Author of this revelation has closed it with this solemn warning, *Surely I come quickly*. "To every mortal, short is the time leading to that awful instant, when he 'shall stand before the presence of God!' Be it our endeavour, by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, so to direct our thoughts and actions, that we may have confidence in our Redeemer, and be of the number of those who 'love his appearing!' Thus may we be enabled cordially to unite with the beloved Apostle in his concluding prayer: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus¹."

¹ Dean Woodhouse.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PRECEDING EXAMINATION WITH
REGARD TO THE PROPHETICAL CHARACTER OF THE
APOCALYPSE.

SUCH then are the grounds, on which it has been attempted in the preceding chapters to establish the principles, by which we ought to be guided in the examination of the great scheme of Scripture prophecy; and the manner in which these principles ought to be applied to the interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. We have seen, that the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom have been the subject of prophecy from the beginning; its great and leading object under the former dispensations. It was the great subject of joyful expectation to holy men *before* the Law. It was the great and leading subject of prophecy *under* the Law; and was represented in the typical services, of the Jewish Law, which were only *the shadows of good things, but of which the body was of Christ*¹. But more than this,—the Redeemer is not only the great *subject*, but he was also the Agent of ancient prophecy; and he was not only manifested to the holy men of old in those appearances, which have been well described as the *preludes* of his incarnation², but he appears also as overruling and disposing the events of the Church and the world, with reference to the bringing in and the

Col. ii. 17.

² See W. Lowth on Ezek. i. 26.

final triumph of that dispensation of mercy, which was to be built on the Incarnation, the Death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of the Son of God. These circumstances afford conclusive evidence of the spiritual character of ancient prophecy. But, amongst other arguments in support of this view of it, it is more especially evident from the *double sense* which pervades so large a portion of it, and from the sublime terms in which many of the prophecies are expressed; which are of such a character, that, at the same time that they are occupied with events connected with the immediate and distant fortunes and destinies of the chosen people, they evidently look beyond them to some future and more glorious fulfilment. Another remark, which was made with regard to the peculiar characteristics of ancient prophecy, and which is a strong additional proof of its spiritual character, relates to the immense range which is occupied by many of the ancient prophecies; comprehending events, of which the peculiar character could, at the time of their delivery, have been but dimly guessed at, and of which the nature even in the present day is involved in great obscurity; because they evidently look forward to a very distant stage of the divine dispensations. All these circumstances, it was remarked, lead us to the expectation, that this obscurity would be cleared up and these difficulties removed in some subsequent dispensation of prophecy; which would reveal to us more clearly the main object and intention of ancient prophecy, and with a degree of light, proportioned to our peculiar condition, as living under the Gospel, the last and most perfect of the dispensations of God. We have shewn how these

remarks are applicable to the prophecies of the Apocalypse; and we have endeavoured to prove, in an examination of this mysterious book, how much the true genius and character of ancient prophecy may be illustrated, and the true end and object of the apocalyptic prophecies established, by viewing it as a portion of the great scheme of prophecy,—extending from the first promise of the Redeemer to the final close of the divine dispensations.

There were also other remarks made with regard to the genius and character of ancient prophecy, considered in connection with the prophecies of the Apocalypse; namely, with reference to *the extent to which temporal subjects are introduced into ancient prophecy*, to *the genius and character of the prophetic style*, and to *the spiritual character of ancient prophecy*. These and other remarks on the genius and character of ancient prophecy, considered especially with reference to their application to the prophecies of the Apocalypse, were illustrated in an examination of that book; and we endeavoured to establish, in this comparison of the apocalyptic prophecies with the prophecies of the Old Testament, the true spiritual object and character of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

This will be made more evident by a brief review of the prophecies, which constitute the main subject of the Apocalypse.

1. In the first place, with regard to the great Agent in the apocalyptic prophecies, we behold the Redeemer himself,—the same Divine Person who had appeared inspiring and directing the prophets under the old dispensation,—again appearing as the author and inspirer of this later prophecy; and

overruling and directing all the events of the Church and the world, which are connected with it, to their great termination! Such he appears in the opening of the Apocalypse; in which he is manifested in all the glories of his pre-existent state, added to all the circumstances of majesty and of tenderness which are derived from his connection with the great scheme of man's redemption,—from his incarnation, his death, his resurrection, and exaltation to the right hand of God as the Lord and the Judge of mankind. Such he appears also as the author of the messages to the seven Churches; where he is manifested, in a peculiar manner, as *the head over all things to his Church*¹; directing it by his wisdom, upholding it by his power,—the terrible avenger of all wickedness, and the everlasting reward of all those who love and obey him.

2. But, as he appears in this peculiar character of dignity and majesty in this opening part of this great and sublime prophecy, how much are our feelings of awe and interest increased, when we behold this same Divine Person appearing again, as the great agent and author of the prophecies relating to his Church; when, in that character in which he is most endeared to fallen man,—that of a *Lamb as it had been slain*,—he takes the book out of the hands of him who sat on the throne; that book, which he alone, of all the inhabitants of earth and heaven, was found *worthy to take and to open the seals thereof, because he hath redeemed us to God by his blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; while the innumerable hosts of heaven sing the glorious song of redemption:

¹ Ephes. i. 22.

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. He then appears in the same character of majesty, going forth on the white horse, *conquering and to conquer.* He appears again at the close of all these dispensations, as the great avenger of his enemies; and, finally, at the end of all things, as the terrible Judge, at whose appearance the heavens and the earth are dissolved; and *the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the mighty men,* are described as *hiding themselves from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;* while he is revealed as the everlasting reward of his faithful servants, *who are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple;* and whose especial blessing it will be to all eternity, that *the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*

The sublime and awful manner in which the prophecies of the Apocalypse are opened, gives a deep and solemn interest to this wonderful book; at the same time that it may be said to mark the peculiar character of the events which are the subject of these revelations. Such is the character of the events which are contained in the Seals; extending from the first and heavenly triumphs of the Redeemer, through the different mournful stages of bloodshed, of the corruption and suppression of Christian truth, of persecution and trial, to that glorious termination of the Christian scheme, which will be manifested in the final destruction of the

enemies of the truth, and in the reward and happiness of the righteous! In perfect harmony also with the anticipations contained in this sublime opening, are the mournful subjects of the six first Trumpets, portending the persecutions and trials from corrupt doctrines and ungodly men, which awaited the infant Church of the Redeemer; the subsequent calamities arising from those grievous corruptions of Christian truth, which in subsequent ages assailed the great doctrines of redemption; and the still more awful corruptions and persecutions, arising from the Mahometan and Papal apostasies, which, it is foretold, shall for so long a period afflict and distress the Christian Church; till the sounding of the seventh Trumpet shall proclaim the downfall of these great apostasies and the universal establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom.

As the separate visions of the Seals and the Trumpets present, respectively, a brief review of the history of the Christian Church, from the first preaching of the Gospel to "the time of the end," and of the trials which it would experience from its anti-christian foes; so, in like manner, does the seventh Trumpet contain the prophetic announcement of the downfall of the great anti-christian powers; of which the different stages are marked by the outpouring of the seven Vials upon the different portions of the dominion of Satan: and this period is followed by the universal establishment of the kingdom of the Redeemer, the binding of Satan, and the Millennium. After which period, it is declared that Satan will be again loosed from his prison for a short season, to tempt the nations into rebellion against the Most High. In this attempt it is, however,

foretold, that he will experience a signal overthrow, and will be for ever consigned, together with the beast and the false prophet, his instruments in the ruin and persecution of the Church, to his infernal prison: after which the general judgment will take place, and the events of this mysterious and awful prophecy will be finally and for ever closed, by the manifestation of those new heavens and new earth, which will succeed to the general dissolution of this world. This is the general outline of the great and important events which constitute the subject of the prophecies of the Apocalypse. But this outline is filled up by prophecies, which contain a more accurate description and a more full revelation of the most striking and important events, which are comprehended in these different periods; a mode of prophetic revelation, which, we have seen, is common to the Apocalypse with the previous dispensations of ancient prophecy; and which,—at the same time that it is admirably adapted to the communication of that increasing light, which it is the object of later prophecy to throw over the great and important subjects of its revelations,—binds together, in one indissoluble bond of connection, the whole chain of Patriarchal, of Jewish, and Christian prophecy, from its earliest dawn to the final accomplishment of the purposes of God.

Such is the manner, in which the history of the Christian Church, as it is briefly sketched in the Seals, is filled up and illustrated in the Trumpets; and in which also the subject of the latter portion of the sixth Trumpet, relating to the Papal apostasy, is pursued in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, and afterwards more fully in the seventeenth chapter, in which the change of the pure religion

of the Redeemer, from that of a chaste and spotless virgin, to that of the *corrupt harlot and the mother of abominations*, is described in characters so awful! Similar to this also is the mode of prophecy contained in the Vials, relating to the destruction of the great apostasies; which is first opened under the seventh Trumpet; is further introduced, with additional circumstances of clearness and sublimity, in the fourteenth chapter, where the Lamb is described as appearing with his company on Mount Sion; and again, with circumstances of a still more definite and awful character, in the sixteenth and nineteenth chapters; the former of which exhibits, in the pouring out of the Vials, the different stages in the downfall of the great anti-christian confederacies, and the latter, the complete and glorious triumph of the Redeemer over all the enemies of his everlasting truth! And similar also to this is the description of the glories and the happiness of the Millennial state, which is the subject of the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters; and which, in this view of it, contains so sublime and so delightful a description of the happiness and the holiness of that state, in which the power of Satan will be confined to his infernal prison, and he will not be permitted to deceive the nations any more.

But with regard to that which constitutes so prominent a part of this prophecy, and which is denominated by Vitranga the *key* of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; as the *rise* of the Papal apostasy, the spiritual Babylon, was the subject of different distinct prophecies, so also is its *decline* and *fall*. This great catastrophe, in addition to the prophecy contained in the close of the sixth and the

seventh Trumpets, is alluded to in the end of the prophecy relative to the ten-horned beast¹; is again distinctly foretold in the fourteenth chapter²; is again brought forward, with additional circumstances of awe and sublimity, on the pouring out of the fifth Vial on the seat of the Beast³; and, again, on the pouring out of the seventh Vial, when *great Babylon is described as coming up in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath*⁴. It is afterwards the subject of that more clear and awful prophecy which is contained in the eighteenth chapter; and it is again brought forward, when the beast is finally described as being cast, together with the false prophet who wrought the miracles before him, into the burning lake⁵. But the same analogy pervades the whole chain of prophecy relating to this important subject. It is seen in the manner in which it is introduced, in the first instance, in the *seventh*, the *eighth*, and the *eleventh* chapters of the prophecy of Daniel⁶; and in each succeeding repetition of the subject with some additional circumstances, and some more explicit revelation; and, again, in still more clear and striking characters by St Paul⁷; and, lastly, in this prophecy, in which the rise and the decline of this great apostasy is described in characters so awful. Indeed, the manner, in which this last, the most striking and prominent of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, is introduced in the different portions of Scripture in which it appears, and with different degrees of clearness suited to the different

¹ Chap. xiii. 10.

² Chap. xiv. 8—11.

³ Chap. xvi. 10, 11.

⁴ Chap. xvi. 19.

⁵ Chap. xix. 20.

⁶ See the Note in the Appendix.

⁷ 2 Thess. ii. 1—12; 1 Tim. iv. 1—5.

stages of the dispensation of prophecy, to which each separate revelation belongs, is at once a conclusive evidence of the harmony of prophecy under both dispensations; and of the power and the interest, with which the important subjects of Scripture prophecy are invested by this peculiar mode of prophetical revelation.

The weight and clearness which is derived to many of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, from this consideration of the connection of the different prophecies with each other, and the light which is thrown by each succeeding prophecy on those which go before, have been illustrated by a reference to different prophecies of this book, and particularly to those which relate to the rise, the progress, and the downfall of the Papal apostasy. But it may be farther illustrated *generally*, by a consideration of the comparison which has been already instituted between the Trumpets and the Vials; and, again, by a comparison of the different subjects of the Vials, both with the preceding and succeeding prophecies; for instance, by a comparison of the subjects of the first four Vials with those of the first four Trumpets, and of the sixth Vial with the first part of the sixth Trumpet. This Vial, which is described as being "poured out on the great river Euphrates, upon which the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared," has, we know, been understood by some commentators to foretell the restoration of the Jews to their own land. But a comparison of it with the prophecy contained in the first part of the sixth Trumpet, will lead us to the belief, that it has reference to the destruction of that great spiritual apostasy, which had its origin

in the regions of the Euphrates, and to the great conversion of the eastern nations, which will follow this great event¹: and a comparison of the remaining part of the sixteenth chapter with the close of the nineteenth chapter, will enable us to form some idea of the dreadful conflicts with the powers of darkness, which still await the Church of the Redeemer, before the efforts of the great enemy of God and man are finally and entirely destroyed. In like manner the trials, which, it is foretold, will await the faithful servants of the Redeemer before the end of these dispensations, as well as the means by which the great apostasies will be finally overthrown, (namely, by *the preaching of the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people*,) is in perfect harmony with the declaration of Daniel, that before *the time of the end many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*²; and with the prophecy of St Paul with respect to the Man of Sin, of whom it is expressly said, that *the Lord will consume him with the breath of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming*³.

These coincidences, which are exhibited in the different prophecies of the Apocalypse, compared together and viewed in connection with the prophecies of the old dispensation; the harmony which is found between the different dispensations of prophecy, both in its language and its imagery; the spiritual object and tendency of the whole dispensation of prophecy; and the spiritual purport of the whole Levitical dispensation, which, in its temple and its services, constitutes the basis of the scenery of the Apocalypse, and thus exhibits a remarkable agreement with that

¹ Comp. Isai. xi iii. 3—7.

² Dan. xii. 4.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 8.

which is represented as the ultimate object and tendency of this dispensation by the other inspired writers of the New Testament;—all tend to confirm the view which has been taken of the great object and tendency of the Apocalyptic prophecy, and of the striking manner in which the Redeemer is manifested, as the great Agent and Object of prophecy under both dispensations.

But there are some other points to be remarked in connection with this important subject. The Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom, which was the subject of the earliest prophecy, and pervades the whole scheme of prophecy under the Jewish dispensation, is still the great and the most engrossing subject of this last and concluding revelation of the Redeemer relative to his Church; in which, as the great obstacles which oppose the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom are more plainly and awfully set forth, so are the assurances of its final triumph more clear and explicit; the prospects of the Gospel appear to brighten as we draw towards the close of the divine dispensations; and the difficulties which seem to obstruct the progress of God's purposes of mercy towards his Church, appear to vanish as they approach to the period of their consummation, when the kingdom of the Redeemer shall be universally established, and *all flesh shall see the salvation of God*. But the most striking thing connected with the prophecies of the Apocalypse, is the light which these later revelations, viewed in connection with the progress of events, throw upon the distant objects of ancient prophecy, and the manner in which they fill up and illustrate the nature of events, which, when they are viewed

only through the veil of ancient prophecy, are involved in almost impenetrable darkness.

(1) For instance, with regard to the prophecy of Noah, (Gen. ix. 25—27), to which allusion has been made before in the second chapter, where we have endeavoured to establish its spiritual purport¹, how much light does it derive from this prophecy of the Apocalypse, in which the conversion of the Eastern nations to the faith of Christ is so plainly and explicitly foretold². For why is the Vial to be poured out on the river Euphrates, the great seat of the Mahometan apostasy and power, but that *the waters may be dried up, that the way of the kings of the earth may be prepared*, and the glory of the Lord may arise upon regions which are now lying in darkness and the shadow of death? But if we are right in our conjecture, that this prophecy of Noah, in addition perhaps to a *temporal* fulfilment, had also a *spiritual* object in view;—(and if we so interpret the *former* part of the prophecy with regard to *God dwelling in the tents of Shem*, it seems impossible to view the *last* part of it in any other light;—in what way is it to be fulfilled? It is declared that *God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant*. Now when we consider how wonderfully *God has enlarged Japhet*, and the manner in which the power of that portion of his descendants, who profess in its greatest purity

¹ The author is happy in being able to confirm this view of this important prophecy by the high authority of Bishop Horsley, who has treated the subject with great learning and eloquence. See Horsley's Sermons, Ser-

mon xvii. He had forgotten the fact, that this prophecy had been treated by this learned Prelate at the time when the second Chapter was written.

² Chap. xvi. 12.

the faith of the Redeemer, is established in the Eastern world, what an earnest does it afford us of the ultimate conversion of these nations to the faith in Christ, through the agency of the descendants of Japhet! For what purpose can we suppose that God would permit *Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem*, under circumstances so wonderful as those under which the British power is established in the East, unless it were for the fulfilment of his high and mysterious destinies with regard to the conversion of these nations to the faith of Christ? And, again, with regard to Canaan and his subjection to Japhet, let us ask,—Are there no appearances in the present day, in the extension of the Gospel amongst the African tribes and in the opening connection with the great moral desert of the continent of Africa, which justify our looking at some period, however distant, to the fulfilment of this prophecy, in the conversion of these nations to the Christian faith? It is difficult to divest the mind of this most interesting view of this important prophecy: and if it is a just one, what a wonderful idea does it present of the mysterious character of God's providence, and of the immense magnitude and extent of the great scheme of prophecy; when this, one of the first and earliest of God's revelations, is only just, in the present day and in this advanced stage of the divine dispensations, beginning to receive that interpretation from events, which justifies us in looking forward to its final and glorious accomplishment!

(2) There are also other prophecies of a similar character, to which allusion was made in a preceding chapter³; which may be brought forward in illus-

³ Chapter II.

tration of the connection between the more distant prophecies of the Old Testament and the prophecies of the Apocalypse. In illustration of this point, we mentioned the greater part of the prophecies of Daniel, and the concluding chapters of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah. These prophecies relate, for the most part, to important events connected with the Christian Church in the latter days; to the conversion of the Jews and the Gentiles; and also to many severe trials and conflicts, in which the Church will be engaged with the powers of darkness during this eventful period. It was stated, that the probable conclusion to be derived from the consideration of all these prophecies is—that the present existing state of things will be followed by a general, or at least a considerable conversion of the Gentile nations; that this, again, will be followed by the overthrow of the great anti-christian powers and the conversion of the Jews; that to this will succeed a prosperous state of the Christian Church; that this time of peace and prosperity will be again followed by a grand attack of the anti-christian powers on the Church, which will, in their turn, experience a signal overthrow; after which we may look forward to a peaceful state of religion till the end of all things¹. This appears to be the probable conclusion which we may derive from a comparison of these different prophecies. But, at the same time, it is extremely difficult, and indeed impossible, to fix the particular application of them. “The Scriptures,” as has been observed by an excellent commentator, “do in general declare there shall be a great destruction of Christ’s enemies here upon earth, before

¹ Chap. II. pp. 36—38.

the general judgment or consummation of all things. But we must not be too positive in assigning the particular place, time, or manner, how these prophecies shall be fulfilled; because the events are secrets, whose causes lie hid as yet in the depths of providence*." This remark may be made both with reference to the predictions of vengeance to be inflicted on God's enemies, as well as to those prophecies of great peace and prosperity, which the prophets so confidently declare yet await the Church of the Redeemer upon the earth. But these periods, both of prosperity and of trial, are clearly distinguished into different distinct periods in the Apocalypse, namely, those which it is declared shall *precede*, and those which shall *follow* the great Millennium. And this is all the light which we can reasonably expect, and perhaps are capable of receiving, in the present stage of the divine dispensations, with reference to events of such awful magnitude and importance, and which relate to a period so distant.

(3) Another remark relates to those prophecies which have a twofold object in view, and which, having *immediate* reference to events connected with the former dispensations, look forward to some farther fulfilment; and of which the ultimate accomplishment is contained in the Apocalypse. The most remarkable of these prophecies are those which are found in the close of the sixth Seal; in the great prophecy concerning the Spiritual Babylon; and in that sublime picture of the Millennial and heavenly state which is contained in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters. In considering, however, this description of prophecies, we must carefully dis-

* W. Lowth on Isai. lxxvi. 16.

tinguish them from those which, like the prophecies of Daniel relating to the great Papal apostasy, speak *immediately* and *directly* of the great subjects to which they relate; and in which the *later* prophecy can only be regarded as speaking more openly and clearly, than perhaps was consistent with the plan of the divine wisdom under the former dispensation.

These examples will serve to illustrate the connection between the prophecies of the former dispensations and those of the Apocalypse;—a connection, we may observe, which extends from the earliest period of ancient prophecy, to some of the last prophecies of the Apocalypse; and which is further cemented by every other species of connection, by types and figures, which connect, in so many different ways, the Christian dispensation with those which preceded it; and prove that we must look, for a more complete knowledge of the great object and design of ancient prophecy, to the fulfilment of this last and most interesting revelation of God.

There is, however, one subject, which ought not to be passed over, in considering the connection between the prophecies of the Apocalypse and those of the Jewish dispensation. It has been remarked,—and it is a remark of great importance,—that the conversion of the Jews does not appear to be once expressly mentioned in the Apocalypse: for it has been shewn, that the prophecy contained in the sixth Vial, relative to the kings from the Euphrates, is inapplicable to this subject. And some writers have strained the Apocalyptic prophecies in an unnatural manner, in order that they might make them comprehend this important subject. But it does not appear to fall within the plan of the Apocalypse,

that the conversion of the Jews should be especially mentioned. The conversion of the *Gentiles*, as distinguished from that of the *Jews*, is not once alluded to. The prophecies of the Apocalypse, without dwelling either upon the one people or the other, foretell *generally* the universal prevalence of the Gospel: and this is perhaps most consistent with its character, considered as the great prophecy of the Christian dispensation. Indeed, the omission of all mention of the Jews, as distinguished from the Christians, appears to be satisfactorily accounted for by Vitringa¹, on this principle,—that all distinction between Jew and Gentile is done away under the new economy of redemption, *in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free: but all are one in Christ Jesus*²: and Christians are here described as the spiritual Israel, inasmuch as *being Christ's, they are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*³. And this is in perfect harmony with the general character of the language and imagery of the Apocalypse; in which images, borrowed from the Jewish dispensation and the ordinances of the Levitical worship, are not only applied to the purer worship and more spiritual privileges of Christians under the Gospel, but are employed to adorn the sublime imagery in which the blessings and glories of the Messiah's kingdom are set forth. The view which is thus presented to us, from this and from other considerations, of the spiritual character and objects of ancient prophecy, and more especially of the Apocalypse; and the consideration that prophecy in general, in its different stages, exhibits to

¹ Vitringa, p. 303.² Gal. iii. 28.³ Ib. 29.

us merely the different links of *one great* chain, commencing at the Fall and extending into eternity, —will reconcile us to the omission of this important subject in this book, when we consider that it is expressly declared in all the prophecies of the Old Testament, which have reference to the Jewish people, from the time of Moses to the close of the canon of prophecy; and more especially, that it is an express and prominent subject of revelation in different prophecies of the Old Testament, which are intimately connected with some of the most sublime prophecies of the Apocalypse, in which the future triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom are most clearly and explicitly foretold.

It is the great subject of those prophecies of Isaiah, in which the conversion of the Gentiles is most clearly and explicitly foretold¹. It constitutes a great feature in the prophecies of Jeremiah. It is the subject of many of the prophecies of Ezekiel, and particularly of the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh chapters, which immediately precede the prophecies relative to Gog and Magog and to the building of the Temple; which, as we have seen, relate to that destruction of God's enemies, and to that universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, which will take place towards the close of the present dispensation. It is the subject of the concluding part of the prophecy of Joel, in which, having spoken of a great conversion of the Gentile nations, he proceeds to declare the conversion of the Jews; and concludes with a prophecy of a great destruction of the Gentile nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat;

¹ Isai. Lxv. Lxvi.

² Joel ii. 28—32; iii. 1, 2, &c.

which, as we have seen, harmonizes with some very important passages in the Apocalypse³. It is the subject of that most beautiful and affecting prophecy of Zechariah, in which he describes the Redeemer as *pouring upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born*⁴. And the actual period of their conversion is fixed by the prophet Daniel to the close of the 1260 days, *when the Lord shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people*;—the same period, during which the saints of the Most High are to be given into the power of the little horn; and which, in this prophecy, is fixed for the duration of the two great apostasies, and for the final destruction of the enemies of God⁵. In perfect agreement also with this unanimous testimony of these prophets is the testimony of St Paul, that *blindness is in part happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*⁶; and of our Redeemer himself, that *Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*⁷. We cannot, therefore, complain that God has left us without sufficient light on this most interesting subject; when, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and examining former prophecies by the light which is thrown upon them by later revelations,—we are able to collect so much with regard to the *general*

³ Chap. xiv. 14—20, &c.⁴ Zech. xii. 10; xiii. 1.⁵ Chap. x. 7.⁶ Rom. xi. 25.⁷ Luke xxi. 24.

character and order of the divine dispensations. And this ought to be sufficient to satisfy every pious and well-regulated mind. It is not for us to know "the times and the seasons which the Father hath placed in his own power," or to indulge in presumptuous speculations with regard to the exact order and method in which it may please the Almighty to fulfil his gracious designs in the accomplishment of the great scheme of man's redemption. In surveying the dispensation of prophecy, from its first and earliest dawn to its most distant revelations with regard to the final issue of the divine dispensations, there is nothing so striking as the wonderful harmony which pervades the whole: and the evidence of a divine original, arising from this wonderful agreement in its different parts, increases, the more we consider the vast extent of the subject, and the manner in which every successive examination throws some new light upon a system, which, like the natural world, exhibiting so many endless varieties, affords the clearest evidence of the most remarkable unity of purpose; and thus binds together the apparently discordant parts of both dispensations in one harmonious whole. There is nothing more astonishing than the manner in which this prophecy extends its views into the remotest scenes of futurity. Yet even here, on examining it by the light of former revelations, there appears to be an unity of purpose, which at once brings satisfaction to the mind, and carries with it the evidence of its divine original.

If, therefore, the object of prophecy be the same in every stage of the divine dispensations, it is evident that we ought to consider the Apocalypse

as a *part* of this great scheme; and that no other view of it can enable us to form correct ideas with respect to its object, its character, and its interpretation. The truth of this is evident, from the inconsistencies into which interpreters have been led, by the views which they have formed respecting it, and the various opinions which they have entertained with regard to the object and intention of this prophecy; as may be shewn from a brief survey of some of the principal schemes of different interpreters, which have been noticed in the preceding examination of the prophecies of the Apocalypse.

1. In the first place, with respect to those interpreters, who consider the prophecies of the Apocalypse to be almost exclusively of an historical character, and look for their fulfilment in *temporal* events connected with the affairs of the Christian Church. This view of the subject, as has been shewn, is entirely at variance with what appears to be the great object of all prophecy, and especially of the Apocalypse, considered as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy. Such a view of it has been also shewn to be inconsistent with the grandeur and sublimity of the symbols which are employed, and of the obvious meaning and import of these symbols in the prophetical language of the Old Testament.

2. Another evidence of the erroneous views, into which persons have been led by the want of a due attention to the great scope and object of ancient prophecy, may be seen in the schemes of interpretation, which have been adopted by some of the most eminent expositors of the Apocalypse;

by Mede, Bishop Newton, and their followers, in their application of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, *partly to temporal, and partly to spiritual* objects; and in the confusion which has been consequently introduced by them into the prophecies of the Apocalypse. These have been noticed at length in different parts of the preceding examination. (1) The first remark relates to the interpretation, which Mede has given to the Seals in the application of them to the Roman empire; an application which, it has been shewn, is neither agreeable to what we believe to be the great end and object, both of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, and of the great scheme of Scripture prophecy in general; nor with the character of the symbols which are employed; nor with any end to be answered to the Christian Church at the time when this prophecy was delivered; nor, lastly, with the imagery employed in the sixth Seal; which is of such a character, that it cannot be applied in its full import to any events of inferior character to those, which, we may collect from other parts of Scripture, will accompany the judgment of the great day and the general dissolution of all things. (2) The same objections apply also to the interpretation which has been affixed by these learned writers to the first four Trumpets; which, in their application to Imperial Rome, do not appear to be connected with the great object of this prophecy, and possess the additional disadvantage of exhibiting a remarkable inconsistency with the last three Trumpets, and particularly with the seventh Trumpet, which, by the unanimous consent of all interpreters, is understood in a spiritual sense;—by Bishop Bossuet

and the Romanists with regard to the establishment of Christianity on the overthrow of idolatry; and by the majority of Protestant commentators, to that universal prevalence of Christianity, which will take place on the overthrow of the great apostasies. Indeed, we have seen that even Vitrिंगa himself, who has maintained, with so much learning and so many convincing arguments, the spiritual character of the prophecies of the Apocalypse,—is not entirely free from blame in this respect. For though he admits the spiritual application of the third and fourth Trumpets, yet he has supposed the first two Trumpets, together with the fifth, to be fulfilled in the irruption of the barbarian nations on the Roman empire¹. The same observations may be made with regard to the different erroneous interpretations, into which Mede has been betrayed by a tenacious adherence to his own hypothesis, in the views which he has taken of the different subjects contained in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters. But what appears to be the most erroneous part of the hypothesis of this most learned and admirable man, is the separation which he makes of the prophetical parts of this book into two divisions, in the middle of the sixth Trumpet. The whole prophecy of the Apocalypse is divided, according to his hypothesis, into *two* principal parts; the *first* containing the introduction and the addresses to the seven churches; the *second* the account of *the things which shall be hereafter*: and this second part is again arranged by him in two other great divisions; of which the first part, which may be called the prophecy of the SEALED BOOK, extends

¹ Vitrिंगa, pp. 340—352, 377, &c.

from the beginning of the *fourth* chapter nearly to the conclusion of the *tenth*; and the other, which may be called the prophecy of the LITTLE or OPEN BOOK, reaches from the *eighth* verse of the *tenth* chapter to the end of the prophecy. "These two parts," as Bishop Hurd has well described them, in his review of Mede's hypothesis, "are also syn-chronal; so that, setting out from the same goal, and measuring the same space, they both concur in the same end: but with this difference, that the *former* division more immediately regards the affairs of the *empire*; the *latter*, those of the *Church*." But this division of the book is entirely imaginary; and, as has been before observed, makes a separation of it in a part in which it has been inseparably joined together by God. For what are the subjects of this Trumpet? The *former*, comprehended in chap. ix. 14-21, by a remarkable agreement amongst the commentators, is applied to the Mahometan apostasy; the *latter*, contained in the first part of the eleventh chapter, by an almost equal consent, is applied to the Papal apostasy; of which the character is described more fully in some of the following chapters. If these two great apostasies are thus united together in the volume of revelation, it affords an awful view of them both. It was not the intention of this learned writer, who, in his valuable writings on this book, has done so much to establish the anti-christian character of the Papal apostasy, to injure the cause of religious truth. But if the hypothesis, which has been

¹ *Lectures on Prophecy*, Sermon x.; in which discourse, and in the *eighth* Sermon of Bishop Hallifax,

preached at the same Lecture, may be found an excellent and succinct account of the system of Mede.

adopted by him with regard to the division of this book, be a just one, it materially affects the estimate which we must form of the character of the Papal apostasy, when we consider it as the special subject of the same revelation with the corrupt and deadly apostasy of Mahomet. The question relating to this view of the Papal apostasy, is a question of Scripture, and of Scripture alone. It arises immediately out of, and depends upon the interpretation which has been attributed by us to the sixth Trumpet: and, as involving the religious character of a Church which extends over so large a portion of the Christian world, demands our most serious, patient, and charitable examination.

3. In the same manner, with regard to the opinion which has been adopted by Grotius and Hammond, and, after them, by Bishop Bossuet and the expositors of the Roman Catholic church, which supposes the greater part of the prophecies of the Apocalypse to have had their fulfilment in the early ages of Christianity; it will perhaps enable us to come to more just conclusions with regard to this opinion, if we examine it by the test which has been applied to the preceding opinions,—their consistency with the prophetic character of the Apocalypse, considered as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy. The consideration of this opinion is of so much the more importance in the present day, because the defence of it has been taken up by a learned writer, whose station may justly carry with it considerable weight². The opinions of Grotius and Hammond have been noticed before; and it has been shewn, both with reference to the appli-

² Professor Lee, *Exposition of the Apocalypse*.

cation of the Seals and the Trumpets to the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as of the subsequent prophecies to *Imperial*, instead of to *Papal* Rome, that such a view of these prophecies is untenable.

(1) For the language which is employed in the Seals is applicable to no *temporal* calamity, however awful; but, in its full sense and legitimate interpretation, can only be applied to the terrors of that day, "when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Nor can the maintainers of this opinion derive any support from a comparison of this prophecy with that of our Saviour, relative to the destruction of Jerusalem; because that prophecy, by the general consent of interpreters, has a twofold application, to the destruction of Jerusalem and the day of judgment: and nothing short of that terrible destruction of the enemies of the Redeemer, which, we believe, will take place on the overthrow of the great apostasies; or those more awful events, which will accompany the final advent of the Redeemer to judgment, will satisfy the full meaning and spirit of the sublime and awful language of this prophecy of the Apocalypse. (2) And with respect to the last opinion, in which the sentiments of these commentators have been adopted by the learned writer to whom reference has been just made; it has been shewn, that there is an insuperable argument against it, in the fact, that these prophecies have reference to *Rome* after its temporal power was in a great measure overthrown: nor are the sublime images which are employed, at all suited, either to the destructions which accompanied the subversion of Rome by its barbarian conquerors, or

to the state of Christianity, when it was in some degree relieved from the persecuting terrors of Imperial Rome, after the establishment of Constantine on the throne. In the same manner, when this learned writer, in conformity with the spirit of these commentators, explains *the time of the end* of the execution of God's vengeance on the idolatrous nations; when he explains the binding of Satan, described in the twentieth chapter, of the power given to the apostles over evil spirits; when he explains *the thousand years* of the times of peace which followed the preaching of the Gospel, and "the loosing of Satan to deceive the nations," of the general persecution; when he explains the *first resurrection* of the *spiritual* resurrection of those who embraced the Gospel; and supposes the close of the twentieth chapter to contain a prediction of a renewed attack of Satan upon the Church, and of his final overthrow by the general preaching of the Gospel¹. Such an application of these prophecies appears, not only to fall far below the sublime and awful language which is employed; but to leave us destitute of the support of prophecy during a long period of trial to the Church, in which it is improbable that God would leave himself altogether without a witness to the world, either of the corruptions and trials which true religion has been destined to endure, or of its final and glorious triumph. The descriptions of the prosperity of the Church, which are contained in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the Apocalypse, glorious and animating as they are in their assurances of the final triumph of true religion, are not *alone*

¹ Professor Lee, *Exposition of the Apocalypse, Sermons*, pp. 338—347.

sufficient to satisfy the mind, which dwells with sorrow upon the trials which true religion is even now destined to endure; upon the clouds which rest upon so large a part of the Christian world; upon the darkness which overwhelms so large a portion of mankind, upon whom the light of the Gospel never shines. We desire to know, *why* it has pleased God to visit his Church, for so many ages, with such trials; from what causes they arose; for what reasons the Almighty Father, in his infinite wisdom, permits their continuance; and *when* these afflictions shall finally cease. *Such* a view of the divine dispensations is contained in the preceding exposition of the prophecies of the Apocalypse; which exhibits to us an interesting prospect of the Christian Church, both in its trials and its triumphs, from the time when the Redeemer left the earth to the great consummation of all things; and in which we behold the great Redeemer himself leading forth his Church to triumph and to victory; and never forsaking it, under all its trials, till the great adversary of God and man, and all the enemies of his truth, shall be destroyed. And, in this view of the Apocalypse, we find it exhibiting a remarkable agreement with the prophecies of the former dispensations, and throwing a light over these dark and distant intimations of the future plan of Redemption, which connects them with the more clear and distinct revelations of later prophecy; and thus presents to the mind the whole scheme of prophecy in interesting and delightful harmony with that view of our Redeemer's character, in which we regard him as *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.

But the due consideration of those opinions, which would apply the greater part of the Apocalyptic prophecies to the earlier period of the Christian dispensation, is more especially important; inasmuch as they strike at the root of that important doctrine, which it has been the object of the preceding pages to establish, with regard to the period of the duration of the two great Apostasies. This doctrine, as far as it regards the Papal apostasy, has been shewn to be necessarily connected with the true interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel, which evidently have reference to a *very distant* period of the Church; and to be alone in harmony with the great object and scope of the Apocalyptic prophecies, which have reference not to *temporal* objects, but to the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom. Indeed, the great object of these prophecies is so evident, that those who have rejected the received doctrine with regard to the period of the 1260 years, have looked for the fulfilment of them in *Rome*, either in its *former* state before the Imperial government was destroyed, or in some *future* condition of the Roman Church, in which they will have a more complete and accurate fulfilment¹. But *both* these opinions appear to be destroyed by the terms of the prophecy itself, which appear to limit the time, in which this apostasy was to make its appearance, to the period immediately *succeeding* that in which the *temporal* power of Rome was destroyed.

1. In the first place, Anti-christ was to be a *spiritual* tyranny. Now *no spiritual* tyranny can be said to have existed at Rome, whilst its *temporal* power was flourishing. The oppression which Christ-

¹ See Maitland's *Second Inquiry*, pp. 129—31.

ianity experienced in its early period, was entirely from the persecuting power of Imperial Rome.

2. Secondly, this anti-christian power was to arise in Rome after its *temporal* head was destroyed. Now such a power, a *spiritual* tyranny, *did* arise upon the destruction of the power of Imperial Rome, which for a long season *did* continue to enslave the Christian world.

3. Thirdly, this power was not to arise till a certain *let* was removed out of the way. This *let* was the Imperial Roman Empire, for whose preservation we have the testimony of Tertullian and others of the Fathers, the early Christians were accustomed to pray; because, as long as it existed, they believed that Anti-christ could not be revealed; and that the greatest calamity which ever threatened the world was delayed by its preservation.

4. Lastly, it has been shewn, that all attempts to establish the fulfilment of the prophecy of the 1260 days, considered with reference to its *literal* interpretation, have signally and manifestly failed; and that nothing but understanding this period in its *symbolical* meaning will enable us to reconcile it with the prophecies of Daniel, which evidently have in view a future and a distant fulfilment.

These marks, selected from different parts of Scripture, appear to fix the commencement of the 1260 years to that *age* at least, in which it has been fixed by the majority of Protestant commentators. And with regard to the fulfilment of these prophecies, we must not seek it, either in countries, where other causes have operated to neutralize or destroy what have been charged as enormities on the Church of Rome; or in those numerous indi-

viduals of every age, whose lives have been an honour to our common Christianity, and who have been amongst the foremost to renounce any participation in the tyrannical and persecuting dogmas of the Church of Rome. But we must behold it in the decrees of Popes and of Councils; in the practice of that Church in the darkest periods of its history, and when its power was exercised without controul; and in those parts of the history of modern times, which exhibit instances of a tyrannical and persecuting spirit, which are almost without a parallel in any age. It is true, that the Church of Rome maintains the great doctrines of Christianity. But who can deny that the corruptions, which have been introduced into them, are such as entirely to annihilate them in their great and fundamental principles; and to destroy the peculiar character, which belongs to them, considered in their connection with those views of the Gospel dispensation, which teach us to regard it as a scheme of mercy from God to fallen man?

It is evident, indeed, that the prophecies relating to Papal Rome,—which are so striking, when we view them as constituting a chain of prophecy, commencing with Daniel, as carried on by St Paul, and finally set forth by St John, in all their power, in the Apocalypse,—would lose much of their force, if we could believe, with some eminent writers, that the Papal apostasy is not in any way alluded to by St Paul. Amongst those persons who have taken this view of the subject, some have supposed Simon Magus to be pointed out under the description of the *Man of Sin*; others, the Gnostics; others again, the Jewish people; which last is the opinion of Le Clerc, Lightfoot, Hammond, and Whitby. A

late learned writer¹, (who however agrees with the majority of the commentators, in the application of the vision contained in the seventh chapter of Daniel and the corresponding prophecies of the Apocalypse to Papal Rome,) is of opinion that the *Man of Sin* is intended to personify those *false Christs and false prophets*, predicted by our Saviour, who were to appear before the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the *apostasy* or *falling away* refers to that departure from the Christian faith, of which the *Man of Sin* was in part to be the occasion. This is in perfect agreement with the view which is taken by this writer of the prophecies contained in the Seals; which he supposes, with Grotius, Hammond, and Lightfoot, to have been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem². If, however, we compare these different opinions with the terms in which St Paul describes the character of the Man of Sin, we shall find that they fail in their application in almost every particular. Whereas, on the contrary, if we examine the prophecies of St Paul relative to the *Man of Sin* and the *Apostasy of the latter times*, in connection with the prophecies of Daniel, on the one hand, and with those of the Apocalypse, on the other, we shall find them distinguished by characters of agreement, which it is impossible to mistake³. And when they are considered together in one view, they not only prove, what is evident from other passages⁴, that, amongst his many other high spiritual endowments, the gift of prophecy was in an eminent degree

¹ The late Dr Pearson, Master of Sidney College, Cambridge, and Christian Advocate. *Warburtonian Lectures*, Lect. VIII. pp. 351—61.

² *Warburtonian Lectures*, Lect. x.

³ See the Note in the Appendix.

⁴ Comp. Rom. xi; Acts xx. 29, 30.

imparted to St Paul⁵; but they also exhibit a chain of prophecy, which is wonderful, both in its connection and in its details; and which ought to be weighed with the greatest impartiality and deliberation, before we recede from a view of these important prophecies, which is sanctioned by the authority of so many learned men, and is confirmed by such strong internal evidences of truth.

In the midst of contemplations of such deep interest as are inspired by this view of the Apocalypse, considered as a portion of the great scheme of prophecy extending from the first promise of a Redeemer to the end of all things, it would afford little satisfaction to dwell, either on the crude theories and mistaken views which have been adopted by some expositors of the Apocalypse; or on the blasphemies, with which it has been assailed by open infidels, or by others who are Christians only in name. But the consideration of the injuries which religion has suffered from these persons, ought to teach us a lesson of caution,—how we take up hasty opinions respecting a book, which, above all others, requires a patient investigation, and an acquaintance with the whole volume of Revelation. These were the qualifications which were brought to the study of this book by such men as Mede and Vitranga, and others of more recent times, who have brought to bear upon it their prodigious stores of learning; and have applied them,

⁵ This is disputed by Dr Pearson, who observes, that “though it may be admitted, that the Apostles, in their Epistles, with the view of enforcing the respective objects of them *referred* to prophecies, as far as they were then intelligible, it seems hardly consistent with propriety to suppose, that prophe-

cies were in the first instance delivered in the Epistles. Besides this, it does not appear that any of the writers of the Epistles, in their characters as *such*, lay claim to the ability of foretelling future and far distant events.” *Warburtonian Lectures, Lecture VII.* pp. 319, 20.

with admirable modesty and diffidence, to the illustration of this last and most interesting portion of the oracles of God. With regard to the view, which has been adopted in the preceding exposition, of the great object of the Apocalyptic prophecies, it is not only one of the deepest interest, but appears to harmonize with the whole object of the Scripture revelation. "For the Scripture," as Bishop Butler has admirably observed¹, "taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in this one single view, considered as God's world: that is, a general account of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostasy from God, and state of wickedness, which it every where supposes the world to lie in! And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political state of things, as religion is affected by it. Revelation, indeed, considers the common affairs of the world, and what is going on in it, as a mere scene of distraction; and cannot be supposed to concern itself with foretelling, at what time, *Rome*, or *Babylon*, or *Greece*, or any particular place, should be the most conspicuous seat of that tyranny and dissoluteness, which all places equally aspire to be; cannot, I say, be supposed to give any account of this wild scene for its own sake. But it seems to contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world, as the general state of religion, has been, is, or shall be affected by them, from the first transgression, and during the whole interval of the world's continuing in its present state, to a certain future period, spoken of both in the Old and New Tes-

¹ *Analogy*, Part II. Chap. VII.

tament, very distinctly, and in great variety of expression: *The times of the restitution of all things*²: *When the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared unto his servants the prophets*³: *when the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: And the kingdom shall not be left to other people*⁴, as it is represented to be during this apostasy, but *judgment shall be given to the saints, and they shall reign*⁵: *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*⁶."

This view of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, though it is, in some respects, one of melancholy interest, is at the same time pregnant with glorious and delightful anticipations: and though it sets forth in mournful colours the trials and afflictions which await the true religion in the world, yet it assures us of its final triumph. And when we consider the vast extent of the prophecies which are contained in this book; the immense magnitude and sublime interest of the subjects which they embrace; the general harmony which pervades the whole of this wonderful and mysterious plan,—considered, on the one hand, in connection with the divine dispensations from the beginning, and, on the other, with the future prospects of religion, as they are detailed in these prophecies to the end of all things; and when we, lastly, consider the light which the prophecies of the Apocalypse, as they approach to their fulfilment, throw upon the prophecies of the former dispensations, it gives a deep interest to the whole

² Acts iii. 21.⁵ Dan. vii. 22; Rev.³ Rev. x. 7.⁶ Dan. vii.⁴ Dan. ii.

subject; and must convince every reflecting mind, how wonderfully the scheme of prophecy, which is contained in the Apocalypse, is suited to the place which it occupies in that dispensation of mercy, which was the subject of the first promise after the Fall, and will have its final consummation in the happiness and the glories of eternity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

ALTHOUGH the question of the inspiration of the Apocalypse is, in one respect, involved in so much greater difficulty than that of any other part of the Bible, from the circumstance of its containing so large a mass of unfulfilled prophecy; yet, in other respects, this book possesses advantages peculiarly its own, both in the subject itself of the prophecy, and in the station which it occupies in the great scheme of prophecy relating to the divine dispensations. For the Apocalypse, being occupied with one great subject, that of man's redemption; and stretching forth, on the one hand, through the various dispensations of prophecy, (with all of which it is intimately connected,) to the first promise of a Redeemer, which was made to man immediately after the Fall; and on the other, to that final and glorious close of the divine dispensations, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*; in the uniformity which it exhibits in its doctrines with the great doctrines of redemption, and its harmony with the former dispensations of prophecy, possesses an evidence in support of its inspiration, which is calculated to fill the Christian with feelings of wonder

and gratitude to the great Author of his faith; and which infidelity itself can neither gainsay nor deny. The Christian, therefore, taking his stand, as it were, in the midst of this wonderful scheme,—with the Gospel in his hand, the inspired record of his salvation, and his unerring guide in the interpretation of those prophecies which are already fulfilled, as well as of others, which are in the course of fulfilment,—views the Apocalypse, on the one hand, in connection with those parts of the dispensation of ancient prophecy which have already received their fulfilment; and, on the other, with the expectations which it holds out with regard to the future progress and final issue of the divine plans, connected with the economy of redemption, to the great consummation of all things.

Such a view of the prophetical character of the Apocalypse affords us opportunities of investigating its divine authority, almost beyond what is possessed by any other book in the Bible: and although we find ourselves, as it were, encompassed by a scheme of prophecy commencing with the first dawn of prophetical revelation, and extending to the end of all things; yet we every where trace a general harmony of design with the great universal plan. If we consider the great doctrines of redemption, we behold them embodied in the Apocalypse in all their majesty and all their power. If we consider this book as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy, we behold one uniformity of plan and harmony of design pervading the whole; connecting it with the earliest revelations of prophecy, through all its various stages, to the coming of the Redeemer; and extending this connection through every subsequent period of the

divine dispensations, till it is lost in the fathomless ocean of eternity.

These considerations will shew, that whatever obscurity may attend some parts of the Apocalypse, and, however, some persons may delight to dwell upon this obscurity, as affording a reason for avoiding the study of a book which is attended with considerable difficulty, (though this difficulty is often greatly exaggerated); yet by regarding it as a *part* of the great scheme of prophecy, and as being essentially the prophecy of the Christian dispensation, we possess a *key* which will enable us to explain many of its difficulties, and place it in a point of view, which gives an interest to the study of it, which is very delightful to a religious mind. In considering the Apocalyptic prophecies, we ought never to lose sight of that which is the great object of them all,—the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom. This will throw a clear light, not only over the prophecies of the Apocalypse, but also over the whole subject of ancient prophecy: and though we may not be able to ascertain the express object of particular prophecies, or to point out the exact *time* or *mode* of their fulfilment, we shall discern enough for the purposes of faith, and to enable us to perceive clearly the great design of prophecy from the beginning. And how clear and satisfactory is the light which we derive from viewing the prophecies of both dispensations in this connection, if we find the great subject of prophecy, as we advance, opening out gradually to our view; developing the means by which the Almighty will accomplish the great plan of man's redemption; and assuring us of the final triumph of divine mercy over all the efforts

of our great enemy, to defeat the merciful designs of the Almighty Father for the present happiness and the everlasting salvation of man.

The preceding remarks will furnish us with a guide in considering the inspiration of the Apocalypse:

I. And *first*, with regard to the evidence which we derive from the harmony which it exhibits with the other parts of Scripture, in the representation which it gives of the great doctrines of redemption.

II. And *secondly*, from the prophetical character of this book.

I. In the first place, with regard to the *doctrines* of the Apocalypse;—

1. The first thing which strikes us in the opening of this book, is the salutation with which the Epistles to the Churches are opened from the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity,—*from Him, which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before the throne; and from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness, and the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.* This, as it has been shewn, is equivalent to the epistolary and plainer language of St Paul, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all.* But it perhaps more especially connects itself with that revelation of the doctrine, which is contained in the declaration of our Saviour, when he commanded his disciples to go forth in his name *to preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* It has been observed, that with

respect to the manifestations of the Divine Majesty under the former dispensations, they clearly imply a *plurality* of Persons in the Godhead; and more especially that appearance which was vouchsafed to Isaiah; the appearance, we know of the Redeemer, in his pre-existent state, in which the heavenly hosts are described as singing the song of praise to the three Persons in the Godhead, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory*. But this great doctrine, which was thus obscurely revealed in the Old Testament, and is fully declared by our Saviour and his Apostles in the New, is invested with a character in the Apocalypse, immediately arising out of its peculiar situation in the divine dispensations, in which the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit are more fully manifested. Thus, in this passage of the Apocalypse, the second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity is described as *the Faithful Witness,—the First-begotten from the dead,—the Prince of the kings of the earth*, titles, all of them intimately connected with the characters, in which he is revealed in this book. In the same manner, in the following vision, he appears as *the Lamb*, the character under which he is revealed, as having *redeemed us by his blood out of every kindred, and people, and nation, and language*. In like manner, with respect to the Holy Spirit; he was represented in the vision to the Apostle under the appearance of *seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God*¹. In perfect consistency with this representation, he is joined with the Father and the Son in the salutation to the Churches under the title of *the seven Spirits*

¹ Chap. iv. 5.

which are before the throne; and the prominent manner in which he is brought forward in this book in conjunction with the Father and the Son, is perfectly consistent with the character under which he is revealed in other parts of Scripture, in connection with his agency in the great scheme of Redemption; and particularly in that, which is the great subject of the Apocalypse, the propagation of Christianity and the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom¹.

2. But perhaps the most striking feature connected with the *doctrines* of the Apocalypse, is the manner in which the Son of God is manifested to us in this book; combining all the glories of his pre-existent state with the endearing considerations, which we derive from his incarnation and sufferings; and with the characters of surpassing awe and majesty, with which he is invested by his triumphant resurrection from the grave, and his glorious exaltation at the right hand of God, as the Lord and Judge of mankind! (1) Such he appears, when he is described in the first chapter in the commission to the churches, as *the Faithful Witness,—the First-begotten from the dead,—the Prince of the kings of the earth,—that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood,—who cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him*; embodying in one description all the most sublime imagery of the Old and New Testaments, to heighten the dignity and affecting majesty of the character, under which the Redeemer is manifested to his Church! Such he is manifested again in the same chapter, when he appears in characters

¹ Compare Isai. xxxii. 15; Joel ii. 28, &c.

of surpassing majesty to his servant John; and describes himself as *the First and the Last; as he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, is alive for evermore; and hath the keys of hell and of death.* But how sublime are the ideas which are inspired by the description, when appearing under the character in which he is most of all endeared to fallen man,—that of a *Lamb as it had been slain*,—he is seen in the midst of the throne; while the innumerable hosts of heaven sing the song of Redemption; *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and glory and blessing; Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Where is the person, without the Spirit of God, who could thus unite all the characters, in which the Redeemer was manifested to the holy men of old, all the types and shadows in which he was revealed in ancient prophecy, with the affecting circumstances of his death and sufferings; and thus accumulate all the glorious and endearing attributes, which belong to the Redeemer, as the everlasting Son of the everlasting Father,—the brightness of his glory and the express image of his Person,—the Lamb that was slain,—the Redeemer, the Lord, and the Judge of mankind?

Such is the character of the revelations contained in this book, relative to the Person and attributes of the Redeemer. But when the prophet proceeds to describe the future triumphs of his religion, how sublime is the description, when, in imagery borrowed from ancient prophecy², the Redeemer is described

² Psalm xlv.

as going forth, as he did of old, for the protection and defence of his faithful people, *conquering and to conquer!* And when he appears again, after a long period of gloom and depression to his Church, on mount Sion, with the 144000 of the sealed, preparatory to the final destruction of the great apostasies, how sublime is the vision which accompanies this mild, yet awful display of Almighty power, when the command issues to the angel to bear *the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people;* and the Son of Man himself appears upon a cloud, in terrible majesty, to execute judgment upon the impenitent and unbelieving! But the most sublime description of all is that, which is contained in the nineteenth chapter, when heaven is again opened, and the Son of Man himself appears clothed in majesty and in victory! He comes forth again on a white horse; but it is no longer in the mild majesty in which he at first appeared: but he is described as *Faithful and True, in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the WORD OF GOD. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS.* The full power of the titles and attributes, under which the Redeemer is here manifested, have been illus-

trated in the preceding exposition of the Apocalypse; which thus exhibits him to us, the same in glory and in majesty that he appeared to the holy men of old; and brings to bear on him, in their full power, all the titles and characters under which he is described in ancient prophecy, and all those also which in addition belong to him, as he is revealed to us in the Scriptures of the New Testament, as the Saviour, the Lord and the Judge of mankind. We behold in Him, as he is revealed to us in this prophecy, *the Seed of the woman; the Lamb that was slain; the Star that should arise out of Jacob; the faithful Witness, the First-begotten from the dead; the King of kings and Lord of lords*¹. But as the appearances of the Divine Majesty which are recorded in the Apocalypse, (as has been remarked,) contain in themselves internal evidence of the *reality* of those visions which are described by St John; so also does the manner, in which these titles and attributes are applied to Him, of his inspiration! For what uninspired person could have brought all these titles and attributes to bear upon Him in the manner that is done in this prophecy; when the propriety of their application depends, for the most part, on events and circumstances connected with Him, as the great Agent in the fulfilment of the declarations of prophecy relating to his Church, to the end of all things?

The last remark connected with the manner in which our Saviour is revealed to us in the Apocalypse, relates to the evidence which we derive from it in support of his Divinity. And what a mass of evidence does this book supply in support of this

¹ Chap. xii. 4, 5; v. 12; xxii. 16; i. 5; xix. 16.

great and important doctrine! What other conclusion can we draw from such titles as are applied to him in the opening of this book, where he is called *the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth*; as *Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last*,—as *He that liveth and was dead, and behold is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death*; **THE WORD OF GOD; THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS?** Again, when he is described as presiding over his Church and overruling the destinies and revolutions of the world, that he may fully accomplish the great plan, which he conceived in the counsels of eternity for the salvation and everlasting happiness of the whole race of mankind; and when, in the accomplishment of his gracious purposes of mercy, he exhibits an infinite power and controul over all the hearts and purposes of man, so that not only the evil spirits, but even the events and destinies of the eternal world, appear to be subject to his Almighty will; when we consider the infinite knowledge and infinite power, which are implied in those prophecies which are already fulfilled; and the fearless appeal which is made to the omnipotence of their Author for the accomplishment of the most magnificent plans, extending even to the endless ages of eternity; and when we, finally consider, that the great Agent in this wonderful scheme is the Son of God,—what other conclusion can we derive from all these considerations, than that He, who possesses an infinite knowledge, extending from everlasting to everlasting, and an infinite power, which exhibits an absolute controul even over the powers and destinies of the

eternal world, must be,—what He is proclaimed by the universal testimony of the Old and the New Testament, in the fullest sense of the idea which is attached to the word,—GOD?

3. Another circumstance connected with the doctrines of the Apocalypse, is,—the manner in which the agency of the Holy Spirit is introduced throughout this prophecy. We have seen before, how he is introduced as one of the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity in the address to the Churches, in perfect conformity with the manner of his introduction by our Saviour, in the command which he gave to his Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, and by St Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians¹: let us, in the next place, consider how he is introduced with reference to the affairs of the Church, both in the other parts of Scripture and in the Apocalypse. For instance, the prophet Isaiah, speaking of the blessings which would accompany the preaching of the Gospel, says, amongst other things, that *the Spirit shall be poured out from on high*²: he proclaims his authority as being derived from the Spirit, *The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me*³; and in that passage, in which he speaks of the preaching of the Messiah, he says, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*; and this prophecy, we know, was expressly applied by our blessed Saviour to himself⁴; and, in conformity with this, St Paul declared, that *God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*⁵. The agency of the Holy Spirit is introduced in a very remark-

¹ Matth. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

² Isai. xxxii. 15.

³ Ib. xlviii. 16.

⁴ Isai. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18.

⁵ John iii. 34; Col. ii. 3.

able manner by the prophet Ezekiel; and by Joel, in his celebrated prophecy relative to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost¹; and in many other passages of the Old Testament. He is described as the Agent in the temptation of our Saviour, when *he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil*². The gift of the Holy Spirit constitutes the subject of some of our Saviour's most sublime and consolatory promises to his disciples. It was the *Spirit who said to Peter, Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them*³. He is spoken of by St Paul as the great Agent in the resurrection of the Redeemer; who was *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*⁴. Similar to this doctrine is the declaration to the Churches, seven times repeated in the Apocalypse; *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*⁵. In the declaration with regard to the blessedness of the martyrs, the Spirit is introduced as pronouncing the blessing: *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: even so saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours*⁶. But he is not only the great instrument in the direction of this prophecy; but he is also joined with the Redeemer and the Church in the invitation at the close: *I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will,*

¹ Ezek. i. 12, 21; x. 7; ii. 2; iii. 12, 14, 24; Joel ii. 28—32.

² Matth. iv. 1.

³ Acts xiii. 2.

⁴ Rom. ii. 4.

⁵ Chap. ii. 7, &c.

⁶ Chap. xiv. 13.

*let him take the water of life freely*⁷. Surely this uniformity with the rest of Scripture, pervading this book and extending even to the end, is a strong proof of its inspiration.

4. Again, with respect to the manner, in which the agency of the Evil Spirit is introduced in the Apocalypse, we derive from this also an unanswerable argument in support of its inspiration. When our first parents were placed in Paradise, the first enemy of their innocence and peace was that Evil Spirit, who, having himself forfeited heaven and happiness, is constantly occupied in endeavouring to bring man into the same state of hopeless and interminable misery in which he is doomed to exist for ever! This fall of the angels is expressly mentioned by St. Peter⁸, and also by St. Jude⁹, who has expressly said, that *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*. It is probably with reference to this fall of the angels, and with a farther view to the final destruction of Satan's power, that the prophet Isaiah makes this sublime apostrophe to the king of Babylon, *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning*¹⁰; and that our blessed Lord said to the Apostles, when they came to him rejoicing that even the devils were subject to them in his name,—*I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven*; a declaration prophetic of the triumphs of his religion over the kingdom of darkness¹¹. Satan is also described in

⁷ Chap. xxii. 17.

⁸ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

⁹ Ver. 6.

¹⁰ Isai. xiv. 12; and see the excellent note of W. Lowth ad locum.

¹¹ Luke x. 18; and see Whitby ad locum.

the Old Testament as the tempter and the accuser of men¹. He was the great agent in the misery of Job²; and he is described by St Peter as *like a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour*³. He is styled *the god of this world*⁴; *the ruler of the darkness of this world*⁵; and to him is ascribed *the kingdom of darkness*⁶. Our Saviour not only asserted his power over Satan during his temptation in the wilderness, but also by casting the devils out of the persons who were possessed by them; who came forth and confessed that He was the Son of God⁷. Moreover, it is said with respect to the punishment of the Evil Spirits, that they are *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*: and in perfect conformity with this doctrine, we find the devils, who possessed the man in the country of the Gergesenes, saying to our Saviour, when he commanded them to come forth, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time*⁸? that is, before the time appointed for their punishment: and our Lord, in passing sentence upon those on the left hand, says, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*⁹. Now a remarkable uniformity with this doctrine pervades every part of the Apocalypse, where the subject of Satan and his agency in the world is mentioned. The fall of Satan and his angels is expressly alluded to in the twelfth chapter,

¹ 1 Chron. xxi. 1; Psal cix. 6; Zech. iii. 1.

² Job i. 7.

³ 1 Pet. v. 7.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

⁵ Eph. vi. 12.

⁶ Col. i. 13.

⁷ Luke iv. 41.

⁸ Matth. viii. 29, compared with Mark v. 7, 8; Luke viii. 28, 29.

⁹ Matth. xxv. 41.

(xii. 9); and it is with reference to his temptation of our first parents, that he is especially called in the same passage, *that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world*. In perfect conformity also with his character, as the tempter of our fallen parents, he is described, as the first enemy of the Christian Church, laying wait for its destruction, that he might devour the offspring of the woman¹⁰, of whom it was foretold, that he should *rule all nations with a rod of iron*¹¹; and the evidence of his power was seen in the persecutions and trials from *without*, and the efforts of false teachers *within* the Church, which assailed, almost to destruction, the infant Church of the Redeemer. The first mention of him is, when, on the sounding of the third angel, *a great star* is seen "to fall from heaven, burning as it were a lamp; of which the name is called *Wormwood*; upon the falling of which the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many died of the waters, because they were bitter;" which is descriptive of those corruptions which, at this period, at the instigation of Satan, were seen to invade and subvert a great part of the Gentile Christian Church¹². The next time that he is mentioned, is when, on the sounding of the fifth angel, St John *beholds a great star fall from the heaven unto the earth, to whom was given the key of the bottomless pit*; upon the opening of which a smoke of locusts arose out of the pit. By these locusts are represented those teachers of false doctrines, which, at this period of the Church,

¹⁰ Chap. xii. 1—5.

¹² Chap. viii. 10, 11. See Wood-

¹¹ Psal. ii. 9, compared with Rev. house ad locum.
ii. 27; xii. 5; xix. 15.

desolated the Christian world; and the name of whose leader and king, so expressive of that spiritual death, of which they were so fatal a cause, was *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*¹.

He next appears as the Beast out of the bottomless pit, the persecutor of the Witnesses, (xi. 7); and, again, as persecuting *the woman, and making war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ*, (xii. 17); and the two beasts, who are described in the thirteenth chapter as persecuting the saints, are said to derive their power from the Dragon².

He appears again upon the pouring out of the sixth Vial, when the prophet beholds *three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet*; which are said to be *the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the whole earth and of the whole world, to gather them to that great day of the battle of God Almighty*; exciting the enemies of the Church to their last effort for its destruction³. And upon the first great subjugation of his power during the Millennium, *an angel is seen to come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled*: after which, upon the expiration of the thousand

¹ Chap. ix. 1—11.

² Chap. xiii. 2, 4.

³ Chap. xvi. 13, 14.

years, it is foretold, that *Satan shall be again loosed out of his prison, to deceive the nations, and to gather them together again in battle* against the Church of God. However, it is declared, that *fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

Such is the prophetic history of the efforts of the great enemy of our salvation, as they are detailed in the Apocalypse, against the Church of Christ, till the final destruction of his power. Now let us compare the whole history of the agency of Satan, as it is contained in the Old Testament and in the preceding parts of the New Testament, with what is revealed in the Apocalypse concerning the rise, the progress, the duration, and the final destruction of his power; let us consider this wonderful harmony of doctrine, which pervades the Apocalypse, with that of the other parts of Scripture; and let us ask, whether any thing short of inspiration could have produced it? or whether any one, who was not inspired by the Holy Spirit of God, could have drawn such a picture, as is here presented to us, of the agency of the Evil Spirit in the world, in connection with the scheme of man's redemption, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and the power of the great enemy of God and man shall be finally destroyed?—more particularly, when so large a portion of it, as far as it is connected with this prophecy, has been already justified by the fulfilment.

5. In the same manner, with regard to the doctrine of the *Atonement*, how plainly is this doctrine

revealed through the whole of the Apocalypse! In the opening vision in the first chapter, the Redeemer is described as *he that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*. In the vision in the fifth chapter, where he appears to take the book out of the hand of Him that sat on the throne, he appears in the midst of the throne under the resemblance of a *Lamb that had been slain*; in perfect conformity with the other parts of Scripture, in which he was shadowed forth in types, and foretold in prophecy, and pointed out by the Baptist under the image of a Lamb; and also with that representation of him in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he is said, *not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by his own blood, to have entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*¹. When the palm-bearing multitude in the seventh chapter appear before the Lamb clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands, (which robes are declared, in another place, (xix. 8.), to be symbolical of the righteousness of saints,) they are said to have *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*². Lastly, in the fourteenth chapter, when the 144,000 are described as appearing with the Lamb on Mount Sion, they are said to have been *redeemed from amongst men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God*³.

6. Lastly, the Redeemer is spoken of in the New Testament as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven⁴; He who was to restore to man the happiness

¹ Hebr. ix. 12.

² Chap. vii. 14.

³ Chap. xiv. 4.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22; Rom. v. 12—17.

which he lost by the transgression of the first Adam. In perfect agreement with this character, He promises in the Apocalypse *to him that overcometh, that he will give him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God*⁶: and, in the description of the heavenly Paradise, which is contained in the last chapter of this book, we find mentioned, with express reference to the first Paradise, *a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: and in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations*⁷. Finally, in contradistinction to that Paradise which Adam forfeited, it is said of the heavenly Paradise, that *there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve Him*⁸.

Such is the history of the manner in which the great doctrines of Christianity are introduced in the Apocalypse. But in a scheme of prophecy, which extends almost from the first propagation of our religion to the great consummation of all things, we ought to expect an uniformity in the manner of their introduction, suited to the various relations of this wonderful scheme. Such is the manner in which the doctrines connected with the Trinity, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and the agency of Satan in the world, are revealed in this book. But especially with regard to the doctrine connected with the person, the character, and the attributes of the

⁶ Chap. ii. 7. ⁷ Chap. xxii. 1, 2; Gen. ii. 9; iii. 22. ⁸ Chap. xxii. 3.

Redeemer,—how could any person, without inspiration, have brought to bear, as it were in one point, in this book, all the different titles and attributes, under which he is manifested in the Old and New Testaments, and at the same time preserve this consistency quite to the end? It is manifestly impossible that any person could present such a view of the great doctrines of Christianity, as St John has done in the Apocalypse, without inspiration; any more than that he could foresee the events of the Christian Church, which he has thus detailed in this prophecy, extending from the very infancy of our religion to the close of the divine dispensations.

II. We come, therefore, to the second portion of evidence in support of the inspiration of the Apocalypse, which we derive from the consideration of its prophetical character.

We have before observed, that, notwithstanding the difficulties which attend the interpretation of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, it possesses advantages peculiarly its own, when it is considered as a part of the great scheme of prophecy, and as carrying on this scheme through the whole plan of redemption to its final close. This view of the prophetical character of the Apocalypse, at the same time that it prevents persons from bending the prophecies of the Apocalypse to their own preconceived theories, and *then* deriving an argument for its inspiration from their *supposed* fulfilment, gives a deep interest to the whole subject; and the Christian, dwelling on those parts of the Apocalyptic prophecies which have been already fulfilled; viewing them all in connection with the whole scheme of prophecy from the beginning; and looking forward to their completion in

future stages of the divine dispensations,—derives an argument for their inspiration, which no assaults of infidelity can shake.

1. In considering the subject of ancient prophecy, we made two important remarks relating to the subject; of which the *first* relates to the great subject of prophecy from the beginning, and the *second* to the Person, who was the great agent of prophecy under the former dispensations. With regard to these different points, we have seen that the great subject of prophecy under the old dispensation, was the Redeemer and his everlasting kingdom; and that the great *agent*, as well as the *subject* of prophecy, was the Redeemer himself in his pre-existent state; who thus appeared under the former dispensations, directing all things connected with that religion, of which he was afterwards to become the Author and the Minister to man. There is a singular uniformity, in these respects, in the prophecies of the Apocalypse; of which the one great subject is that religion, which is built on Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone; and of which the great Agent and Director is the Redeemer himself, from the first sublime opening of this important prophecy to its close. It is evident, that no one, without inspiration, could carry on such a scheme as is contained in the Apocalypse, and preserve such an uniformity as it exhibits with the former dispensations of prophecy: much less could he exhibit the Redeemer in the characters in which he appears in this prophecy; characters which, as far as they are connected with the old dispensation, are not fully revealed in any other book of the New Testament; and of which the great light is to be derived from this last and closing book of Revelation.

2. Having made these remarks on the agreement, which is exhibited in these respects, between the dispensations of ancient prophecy and the Apocalypse, and the arguments for the inspiration of this book which we derive from this agreement; we will next proceed to consider the arguments for the inspiration of the Apocalypse, arising from the examination of the prophecies which are contained in it.

(1) In the first place, with regard to the prophecies relating to the seven Churches of Asia, the judgment denounced upon these Churches in case of their impenitence and neglect, is that *their candlestick should be removed out of its place*. Now what is the present condition of these Churches? The situation of some of them can hardly be ascertained; and in others, the apostasy of Mahomet in a great measure usurps the place of the pure and holy faith of the Redeemer. If we point to Babylon, and Tyre, and Egypt, and other cities and countries, as evidences of the truth of the divine predictions, we may also appeal to the present condition of the Churches of Asia, as existing testimonies at once of the truth and the inspiration of prophecy.

(2) The next portion of the Apocalyptic prophecies is that, which is contained in the Seals. Now it is evident that the argument for the inspiration of the Apocalypse, which is derived from the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy, depends upon the truth of the principles which have been applied to the interpretation of it. But let us consider what evidence we can derive from it, on the supposition that the Apocalypse is to be considered exclusively as a prophecy relating to the religion of the

Redeemer; and that the prophecies contained in the Seals are to be explained on this hypothesis. Now let us review the history of the Christian religion in the world, as it is detailed in the Seals, from the time when it went forth, under the express guidance and protection of its divine Author, conquering and to conquer, through the different stages of mutual animosity and bloodshed, which so soon disgraced the mildness and purity of the Christian faith; the great corruption and scarcity of Christian truth which succeeded; the spiritual death which overspread so large a portion of the Christian world under the Mahometan and Papal apostasies; and, lastly, the persecutions and slaughter, which have been the portion of the faithful servants of the Redeemer in all ages; and let us ask, whether any person could have drawn such a picture of the events of the Christian Church through a long series of ages,—a picture, we may add, which is not composed merely of a confused assemblage of events, but of a regular concatenated history,—unless he had written under the express direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God? Nor is there any thing in the unfulfilled portion of the prophecies contained in the Seals, and particularly in the sixth Seal, which, when we consider the nature of the subject, and compare it with the language which is used in other parts of Scripture with reference to the same events, does not afford additional evidence of its inspiration.

(3) The prophecies of the Trumpets follow those of the Seals: and even if we admit, that the events which are contained in the first two Trumpets, are of too uncertain a character for us to be able to ground on them an argument for the inspiration of

the prophecy which is contained in them; yet we see in the third and the fourth Trumpets a plain and evident warning of those heresies which sprung up in the early Christian Church, and the consequent suppression of Gospel light which followed. But when we come to the two following Trumpets, pregnant with denunciations of "*Woe*" to the Christian world; and behold the clear manner in which the desolating consequences of the Gnostic heresies and the philosophizing infidels of the second and third centuries are pointed out, and the ravages which they carried into the pure and heavenly religion of the Redeemer; when we behold the apostasy of Mahomet painted in colours and arrayed in characters, of which infidelity itself cannot deny the application; and when we further consider the manner in which the rise, the progress, and the triumph of the Papal apostasy is foretold, and view this portion of the Apocalypse in connection with former prophecies relating to the same subject;—how can we believe that any person could have thus described events, which were to happen through a course of successive ages, unless he was guided and directed by the Spirit of Him who alone can *declare the end from the beginning*¹; and who makes the hearts of men, and the events of the world, subservient to the purposes of his Almighty will?

But this portion of the book, constituting, as it does, one of the most prominent and important parts of the Apocalyptic prophecies, and being intimately connected with some of the preceding prophecies, both of the Old and the New Testament, deserves a more particular consideration: and in order that

¹ Isai. xlii. 10.

the argument may lose none of its force, it shall be presented as nearly as possible in the words of an eminent writer, who has supported it with unequalled learning, ability, and power.

In the first place, "Daniel foretels a tyrannical power which should *wear out the saints of the Most High; and they should be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time*²; and again, *for a time, times, and an half*³: (which can no way be applied to the short persecution of Antiochus, because these prophecies are expressly declared to be for *many days*⁴). Now when Daniel foretels such a tyrannical power, to continue such a *determined* period of time; and St John prophesies that the *Gentiles should tread the holy city under foot forty and two months*⁵; which is exactly the same period of time with that of Daniel: and again, that *two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days*⁶; which is again exactly the very same period of time: and again, that *the woman which fled into the wilderness from persecution, should continue there a thousand two hundred and threescore days*⁷: and again, that she should *fly into the wilderness for a time, and times, and half a time*⁸; which is still the very same period: and again, that a *wild beast, a tyrannical power, to whom it was given to make war with the saints and to overcome them, was to continue forty and two months*⁹, (still the very same period of time,) and to have *power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, so that all that dwell upon the earth should worship him*¹⁰:—is it credible or possible, that

² Dan. vii. 25.³ Dan. xii. 7.⁴ Dan. viii. 26; x. 14, &c.⁵ Rev. xi. 2.⁶ Rev. xi. 3.⁷ xii. 6.⁸ xii. 14.⁹ xiii. 7, 5.¹⁰ xiii. 7, 8.

ignorant and enthusiastical writers should, by mere chance, hit upon such coincidences of [occult] numbers? especially since St John could not possibly take the numbers from Daniel, if he understood Daniel to mean nothing more than the short persecution of Antiochus. And if he *did* understand Daniel to mean a much longer, and greater, and more remote tyranny, which John himself prophesied of as *in his time* still future; then the wonder is still infinitely greater, that in those early times, when there was not the least footstep in the world of any such power as St John distinctly describes, (but which *now* is very conspicuous,) it should ever enter the heart of man to conceive so much as the *possibility* of such a power, sitting, not upon the pavilion of heathen persecutors, but *expressly* (2 Thess. ii. 4.) *in the Temple* and upon the seat of God himself."

But the accuracy with which this power is described is no less extraordinary. For instance, "Daniel foretels *a kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, diverse from all that were before it, exceeding dreadful, and shall devour the whole earth*¹: that among the powers into which this kingdom shall be divided, there shall arise *One* power diverse from the rest, who shall subdue unto himself *THREE* of the first powers, and shall have a *mouth speaking very great things, and a look more stout than his fellows*². *He shall make war with the saints, and prevail against them*³. *And he shall speak great things against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand for a long season; even till*

¹ Dan. vii. 23, 7, 19.

² Ver. 8, 20, 24.

³ Ver. 21.

the judgment shall sit, and—the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High⁴. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods; Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women⁵, nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all. And in his estate he shall honour the God of forces, and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain⁶. St Paul and St John describe exactly a like power, and in like words; speaking of things to come in the latter days, of things still future in their time, and of which there was then no footsteps, no appearance in the world. The day of Christ, saith St Paul, shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God:—whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness⁷. Again, The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;—Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c.⁸ St John, in

⁴ Dan. vii. 25.⁵ 1 Tim. iv. 3.⁶ Dan. xi. 36—39.⁷ 2 Thess. ii. 3, &c.⁸ 1 Tim. iv. 1, &c.

like manner, prophecies of *a wild beast* or *tyrannical power*, to whom was given *great authority*, and a *mouth speaking great things*, and *blasphemies*. And *he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God*: And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him. And he that exerciseth his power before him, doth great wonders, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do. And he causeth that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark of the beast¹. And the kings of the earth have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast, even peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. For God hath put in their hearts [in the hearts of kings] to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled². The name of the Person, in whose hands the reins or principal direction of the exercise³ of this power is lodged, is *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth*: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication: And she herself is drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: And by her sorceries all nations are deceived: And in her is found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that are slain upon the earth. And this person, (the political person,) to whom these titles belong, is that great city (stand-

¹ Rev. xiii. 2, &c.

² xvii. 13, 15, 17.

³ xvii. 3, 7.

ing upon *seven mountains*) *which reigneth over the kings of the earth*⁴."

"If in the days of St Paul and St John there was any footstep of such a sort of power as this in the world; or if there ever *had been* any such power in the world; or if there was then any appearance of probability, that could make it enter into the heart of man to imagine that there ever *could be* any such kind of power in the world, much less in the *temple* or *Church of God*; and if there be not now such a power actually and conspicuously exercised in the world⁵;" *then* may we doubt or deny the inspiration of the writings which contain these predictions. But if St John has not only given a description of this power, but has also pointed out, by so many undoubted marks, both the *time* of its appearance, and the *duration* of its sway; exhibiting such a knowledge of futurity, and such an insight into the spirit of former prophecies, as he could derive from inspiration alone; then must we admit, that he wrote under the especial direction of the Spirit of God.

This prophecy also, as it appears in the successive revelations which were made to Daniel, St Paul, and St John, exhibits a remarkable agreement with what has been designated as constituting a distinguishing characteristic of Scripture prophecy; in which each successive revelation adds something to that which preceded it, and effectually establishes the prophetical character of *all* the writings which contain it.

⁴ Rev. xvii. xviii.

⁵ Dr Samuel Clarke, *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*. Prop. xiv. *Works*, Vol. II. pp. 722-3, 725-6.

On the whole, when we compare the predictions contained in this Trumpet with the events of the Christian world, as they have been fulfilled and are now in the course of fulfilment, we might securely rest the inspiration of this book on the fulfilment of these prophecies alone.

4. Such then is the evidence, which we derive in support of the inspiration of the Apocalypse, from the prophecies which are contained in the Trumpets, and from those subsequent prophecies, which are intimately connected with them. A different description of proof must be applied to the remaining portion of the Apocalyptic prophecies, of which the greater part yet remains to be fulfilled. Yet even here we shall find conclusive evidence of its inspiration; and marks, which incontestably establish its character, as a *part* of the great scheme of Scripture prophecy.

(1) And, in the first place, with regard to that which constitutes the subject of the prophecies contained in the Vials, and is further enlarged upon in the succeeding chapters, the downfall of the great antichristian apostasies; this is the great theme and subject of ancient prophecy, which, uniformly and universally, proclaims the final triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom. *Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear*¹. Such also is the spirit of the Apocalyptic prophecies, that *the kingdoms of this world shall become the*

¹ Isai. xlv. 23, compared with Rom. xiv. 10—12.

*kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*²: and the present tendency of the events of the world bears evidence to the truth of these prophecies, and to the probability of their fulfilment in the progress of the divine dispensations.

(2) In the next place, with respect to those prophecies of the former dispensations, which have reference to very distant events in the Christian Church, and extend even to the end of all things; it is evident that these prophecies must be necessarily obscure, even in the present day, and with the increased light which is thrown upon them by the preaching of the Gospel, and the fulfilment of a considerable portion of the most important prophecies relating to the Redeemer's kingdom. But even with respect to these prophecies, if we compare them with those prophecies of the Apocalypse, which appear to have reference to the same events, we shall find that they throw considerable light upon them; and, in the harmony which they exhibit with each other, effectually declare them both to be from God.

1. In the first place, with regard to the prophecy of Noah, which is contained in the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis; of which the probable import has reference to the conversion of those nations, who are the descendants of Shem, by means of the agency of the descendants of Japhet; we have seen the evidence, which the circumstances of these nations at the present day afford of the incipient fulfilment of this most ancient prophecy. Now when we compare this prophecy, and this evidence of the prospect of its future fulfilment, with the prophecy of this book which is contained in the

² Rev. xi. 15.

sixth Vial, in which the conversion of these nations to the faith of Christ is so evidently foretold¹; and *that*, it may be observed, in terms, which are of such a character, that nothing but the partial fulfilment of these prophecies could have pointed out the connection between them;—what an evidence does it afford of the inspiration of both prophecies, and especially of this prophecy of St John; which, from its very nature, shews that its author could not have borrowed anything from the former prophecy, because he most probably was ignorant of the great and important events which are contained in it.

2. There are also other important prophecies relating to the events of the *last times*, to which allusion has been more particularly made; especially those which are contained in the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the book of Daniel, and in the concluding chapters of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah; which relate to some circumstances of great prosperity, as well as of great and severe trials, which, it is foretold, shall befall the Church in *the latter days*²: and we mentioned the impossibility that any person,—more especially one who lived, as St John did, before the events of the Christian Church could have thrown any light upon them,—could have pointed out the particular class of events to which they related. But we find these events distinguished in the Apocalypse into different periods; and these forming part of a scheme, extending from the first promise of a Redeemer into eternity. Now with regard to that part of these prophecies, which is already fulfilled, we derive

¹ Chap. xvi. 12.

² Vid. *supra*, Chap. 11. pp. 32, &c.

from them conclusive evidence of the inspiration of the prophet who has recorded them. Surely it implies also a very high degree of inspiration, that any person should be able to speak so confidently with regard to events connected with the same dispensation, which are still future, and depending upon changes which it is in the power of omnipotence alone to effect; and which must be produced by revolutions, both in the religious and the political world, to which we should hardly venture to look forward, unless we had the assurance of prophecy for their accomplishment. For whatever doubt may hang over the subject, we possess a guarantee in support of their ultimate accomplishment, in the fulfilment of other prophecies, which, at the time of their delivery, were attended with equal improbability with those which have been already fulfilled: and of their ultimate fulfilment, the events of the world, as far as we can expect in the present stage of the divine dispensations, hold out the most confident expectation.

There is also another description of prophecies, which were mentioned as being intimately connected with the proper understanding of the Apocalypse, namely, those prophecies which have what is called a *double sense*, and have a view to an *immediate*, as well as a *more remote* fulfilment. This description of prophecies had its origin in the peculiar character of the Jewish dispensation; which was typical of that greater and better dispensation which was to follow it. Of these prophecies, some had a partial fulfilment under the Jewish dispensation itself; others had their fulfilment in the coming of our Saviour; but the greater part of them are

connected with the Gospel dispensation, and have reference to events connected with the progress of religion till the end of all things. It was, therefore, in a due estimate of the divine character which belongs to this description of prophecy, that Lord Bacon made that fine observation, when he says, that, *in sorting the prophecies of Scripture with their events, we must allow for that latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of the author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age*¹. This *germinant accomplishment*, as Lord Bacon expresses it, extending *through many ages*, contains in itself an incontrovertible proof of its divinity. For who, but God himself, could thus *declare the end from the beginning*, or so arrange the order and character of events, that the events of one age should bear a certain prescribed resemblance to those of another which preceded it? Now those prophecies of the Old Testament, in which a *double sense* is contained, have reference *chiefly* to the latter ages of the world: and, therefore, though we may derive some evidence of their fulfilment, and be materially guided in the interpretation of them, by the light which is thrown upon them in other parts of the New Testament; yet it is to the Apocalypse that we must principally look for a full and clear knowledge, as far as it is possible in our present state, of those great and important prophecies, which are connected

¹ Adv. of Learning, B. II.

with the Christian dispensation to its final close. Now, if we find the Apocalypse exhibiting a remarkable harmony and uniformity with the ancient prophecies; supplying the precise train of events which was necessary to complete what was wanting in the detail of former prophecies, and pointing out their true interpretation²; and thus throwing a light over them, which clearly proves their spiritual import, and blends the different branches of Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian prophecy into one harmonious whole; what an evidence do we possess of the divine character of the whole scheme, and of the inspiration of that prophet, who could thus collect all the scattered rays of prophecy into one point, as is done by St John in this last and closing book of revelation! For instance, what person, without divine inspiration, could have drawn such a parallel as is done by St John between the *spiritual* and the *ancient* Babylon? a parallel which exhibits so wonderful an agreement in every part, and the application of which is confirmed by evidence so convincing. What person could have collected together all the sublime imagery of ancient prophecy in such a manner as is done by St John, in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the Apocalypse, to adorn the description of the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem; and thus at once confirm the spiritual character and the application of the ancient prophecies? This view of the prophecies of the Apocalypse is in perfect agreement with the whole character of this book, which is entirely of a typical character, and is composed of imagery

² In illustration of this point, we may observe, how chap. xviii. 18 fixes the application, not only of the parti-

cular prophecy in which it is found, but of all the prophecies, which are immediately connected with it, to *Rome*.

borrowed from the former dispensations of prophecy. But who could have thus taken upon himself to be the interpreter of ancient prophecy, and have given such a view of its spiritual character, unless he had been guided and enlightened by the Holy Spirit of Him, who is the great Author of all these dispensations?

Lastly, we may observe, with reference to this head, the improbability that St John, who was educated as a Jew, could *invent* such a view of the ancient prophecies as implied their *universal* application: and the evidence of inspiration, which we therefore derive from the manner, in which St John has opened out and disclosed the object and intention of ancient prophecy; and has pointed out its harmony with the great and leading purport of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, with reference to the different trials and changes, through which the religion of the Redeemer is destined to pass to its final triumph, in the universal establishment of his kingdom on earth.

Indeed, the universal extension of true religion in the latter days is the great and leading subject of ancient prophecy. *All thy children, says the prophet Isaiah, shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children*¹; and the prophet Daniel says,—expressly with reference to the great changes which will take place in the world, in connection with the great events which are the subject of this part of the Apocalyptic prophecies,—that *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*². In like manner, previous to the announcement of the overthrow of the spiritual Babylon, *an angel is seen by St John to fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach*

¹ Isai. liv. 13.

² Dan. xii. 4.

unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Now let us compare the signs of the times with these declarations of prophecy; the extraordinary efforts which are making, and which have been unexampled at any former period, to propagate the Gospel amongst heathen nations; the general disposition to receive the truths of the Gospel, which is observable amongst them; and the general dissatisfaction which prevails amongst them with respect to their own superstitions; and, above all, the decreasing bigotry which has been remarked amongst the followers of Mahomet, and their disposition to adopt the literature, the manners, and the customs of European nations;—surely these things afford no obscure evidence of the tendency of the events of the world to the fulfilment of the divine dispensations. The influence also of Papal Rome, which has always prohibited the circulation of the Scriptures, has no longer power to withhold the bread of life from the world: and still, amidst all the clouds which overhang the prospect, the signs of the times and the events of the world seem to point to the ultimate fulfilment of the promises of God.

Surely these considerations appear to call the attention of Christians, in general, to the earnest and serious study of *all* prophecy, and particularly of the Apocalypse, which is emphatically THE GREAT PROPHECY OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION; the closing portion of that great scheme of prophecy, which extends from the first promise of a Redeemer to the end of all things. Whatever difficulties may attend this mysterious book,—difficulties which are inseparable from a prophecy which is connected with subjects so awful, and with events of unspeakable

magnificence and grandeur; of which the greater part are *even now* only in the course of fulfilment, and of which *others* extend even into eternity itself;—yet there is still enough to enable us to discern the great outlines of the prophetic scheme; to convince us that all the greatest corruptions of our religion were foreseen and foreknown by its divine Author; and that the same supreme authority has assured us of the final triumphs of his religion over all the powers of darkness. And when we consider the evidences, which this book contains of divine inspiration, in those prophecies which are already fulfilled, and in the characters of sublimity, which stamp it with the impress of a divine original; when we consider, moreover, the clear light which it throws over former prophecies, and which could proceed from Him alone who inspired the former prophets; the revelations which it unfolds of events which Omnipotence alone can bring to pass; and, finally, the sublime and awful view which it gives of the great doctrines of redemption, and particularly as they are connected with Him, who is the great Author of our salvation, the Redeemer, the Lord, and the Judge of mankind;—all these things combine to invite our serious attention to the study of a book, upon which the especial blessing of heaven is pronounced; and which is eminently calculated to inspire us with feelings of grateful veneration towards that Being, who contrived and executed this stupendous scheme of mercy, for the everlasting happiness and salvation of man.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. Page 37.

NOTE 4. WITH reference to this subject compare Mr W. Lowth's notes on Isai. xi. 11, and Ezek. xxviii. 25. It appears to be impossible to avoid this conclusion, when we consider the direct nature of the promise contained in Deut. xxx. 3—5; at the same time that it ought to be regarded with the same diffidence, that we do all subjects connected with prophecies, which yet remain to be fulfilled.

NOTE B. p. 38.

NOTE 1. See *W. Lowth's note on Isai. lxvi. 16. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, &c.* It may perhaps serve to illustrate the argument contained in the preceding pages, if I subjoin the note of Mr W. Lowth on this passage, which appears to me to be very judicious, and to exhibit a right view of the spirit in which we ought to attempt the explanation of prophecies relating to events so distant: "This," he observes, (speaking of the prophecy contained in this and the preceding verses,) "seems to denote the discomfiture of *Gog* and *Magog*, who are to be destroyed by fire; see Ezek. xxxix. 6—9. They are described in the 38th and 39th chapters of that prophecy, as coming with a great body against the land of Israel after the restoration of the Jews, and their return to their own land, and there receiving an utter overthrow. Or this may be understood of

the battle of *Armageddon*, Rev. xvi. 14; xix. 19, where the armies of Satan and *Anti-Christ* are to be vanquished by the *Lamb* and his followers. Or of the discomfiture of Satan's army, mentioned Rev. xx. 8, 9, which shall be destroyed by fire from heaven. The Scriptures do in general declare that there shall be a great destruction of Christ's enemies here upon earth, before the general judgment, or consummation of all things. Compare with the context here chap. xxxiv. and chap. lxiii. 1—6; Psal. cx. 5, 6; Jer. L. Li. (a great part of which chapters certainly relate to the *latter times*); Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix; Joel iii. 11—14; Micah v. 8, &c.; Zech. xii. 2; xiv. 1—13; Rev. xiv. 20; xvi. 14; xix. 9. *But*," he justly observes, "*we must not be too positive in assigning the particular place, time, or manner, how these prophecies shall be fulfilled; because the events are secrets, whose causes still lie in the depths of Providence. And the very great obscurity of the prophecies, which are supposed to relate to these matters, is a convincing argument that they are not yet fulfilled.*" In connection with these prophecies may be considered that which is contained in Deut. xxxii. 38—43, which appears evidently to have a reference to the *latter times*.

NOTE C. p. 50.

LINE 21. SECT. 3. The same mode of reasoning is adopted by Mr Habershon, in his *Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures*. But it had been long ago applied by Mede to the same subject. See his *Remains on some passages in the Apocalypse*, Chap. x. *Works*, p. 744; where, in one of his learned letters, he observes, "I waved not the question of the *ending* of the forty-two months more than that of their *beginning*; for as I designed their *beginning* in a *latitude*, so by consequent I do their *ending*. If they *begin* between the years 365 and 455, they must *end* between the years 1625 and 1715. Only I refused precisely to determine the year of their ending, which for some reasons I supposed *should not certainly be known till the event should make it manifest: according as was not the precise beginning of the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, till the event discovered it by their ending,*" &c.

NOTE D. p. 115.

LINE 29. The interpretation, which is affixed by the prophet himself in the *fifth* verse to the meaning of the chariots exhibited in this vision, appears, as has been observed, effectually to exclude the idea of *four kingdoms*. Indeed this is the view which is taken by Mr W. Lowth in his note on ver. 5. "*These are the four spirits, &c.* The angels which preside over these monarchies; who receive their commissions from the supreme Lord of all, to govern the affairs of these empires according to their direction. See chap. iv. 14, and the note on Dan. x. 13; 1 Kings xxii. 19." Lowth on Zech. vi. 5. The same view is taken by Bishop Hall, *Paraphrase* ad locum. This appears to contradict the opinion, which is advanced by Lowth in the Preface to his Commentary on this chapter, that the *four chariots* denote *four Empires*.

NOTE D. pp. 193–203.

With this section compare Part v. Sect. ix. pp. 248–265, and notes H and I in the Appendix.

NOTE E. p. 210.

The same view is taken of the meaning of the vision of the *two-horned* beast by Dr Pearson, in his *Warburtonian Lectures*.

NOTE F. p. 218.

NOTE 1. The termination of the period of 1260 years is fixed by Mr Faber to A.D. 1868; by Dr Hales to A.D. 1880; by Mr Habershon to A.D. 1843. (See Faber, *Sacred Calendar of Prophecy*, Vol. II. p. 145. Hales, *Analysis of Chronology*, Vol. II. p. 517. *Dissertation on the Prophetic Scriptures*, Mr Habershon, p. 293.) A learned writer (*Archdeacon Browne*, in his *Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of*

Ely, entitled *The Time of the End*, p. 78,) is of opinion, that "it seems probable that the termination will not be earlier than the time assigned by Mr Habershon, and morally certain that it will not be later than that which is specified by Dr Hales." This is a valuable observation: for although, from considering the gradual rise of the two great apostasies, we may probably conclude that their decline will be also gradual, yet it seems probable, from considering the signs of the times, and the different prophetical periods, as they are laid down by Daniel in his prophecy, and by St John in the Apocalypse, that before the conclusion of the present century we may look for great and awful changes in the moral and religious condition of the world, even if we are not justified in expecting the *entire* accomplishment of these prophecies. Compare the observations which have been made on this subject, pp. 247, 8.

NOTE G. p. 255.

NOTE 2. Bishop Hurd has justly observed from *Mede*, that "*the seven heads of the beast* are a DOUBLE TYPE: *first*, they signify the *seven hills*, on which the city is placed; and *then*, the *seven kings*, or governments, to which it had been subject; but still *on those seven hills*, for which reason the type is made to signify both."—*Lectures on Prophecy*, Sermon. xi. p. 152. *Mede's Works*, p. 653.

NOTE H. p. 256.

NOTE 1. Compare Rev. xvii. 7—12, with Dan. vii. 7—24 Rev. xiii. 1. The comparison of these different passages together at the same time that it confirms the application of these passages to *Papal Rome*, will exhibit the varied and increasing light which is thrown upon the subject by each successive revelation. The vision of Daniel, under the imagery of four beasts, represent the four great Empires of the ancient world, the Chaldean, the Medo-Persian; the Macedonico-Grecian; and the Roman, the first place, in its Pagan state, and afterwards, when it became divided into *ten different kingdoms*, after the Imperial government was destroyed. For as the *fourth beast* represented

fourth kingdom, so do the *ten horns* represent the *ten kingdoms*, which should arise out of it. (Compare verses 23, 24). In Rev. xiii. 1, St John sees *the beast rising out of the sea*, with *seven heads and ten horns*; and on comparing the head which arose after the head which was wounded to death, we have found it to be the same with *the little horn* of Daniel, mentioned Dan. vii. 8, 24, 25. (pp. 196—199.) But this *wild beast* of St John we have shewn, by a comparison with the 11th and 12th chapters, and by other arguments, to represent *Papal Rome*. (See the exposition of the *eleventh* and *twelfth* chapters, and pp. 199—202.) We have again the vision contained in the 17th and 18th chapters, which we have shewn can be applied *only to Papal Rome*. A diligent comparison and examination of these different passages will prove the application of the prophecy to *Papal Rome*, and at the same time shew the additional light, which is thrown upon it by each succeeding revelation.

With regard to these ten kingdoms, Mr Lowman observes, that "*ten*, in prophetic language, does not always mean a precise number, but is used as a certain number for an uncertain, to express in general *several* or *many*; so that there seems no necessity of finding a precise number of ten different kingdoms erected on the ruins of the Roman Empire. Still several interpreters have reckoned up precisely the number *ten*. The following have been enumerated by the illustrious Sir Isaac Newton. 1. The kingdom of the Vandals and Alans in Spain and Africa. 2. Of the Suevians in Spain. 3. Of the Visigoths. 4. Of the Alans in Gaul. 5. Of the Burgundians. 6. Of the Franks. 7. Of the kingdom of Britain. 8. Of the Huns. 9. Of the Lombards. 10. The kingdom of Ravenna." With respect to these kingdoms, Dean Woodhouse has observed, that "though much varied in respect to the people of which they were composed, yet their number has been nearly the same; so that if an average were to be taken in the long course of fourteen hundred years, reaching to our times, the number *ten* would be found to predominate.... These nations have been at times seduced by the harlot and her intoxicating cup; they have imbibed her doctrines and executed her bloody decrees. But a time is also promised, and has already dawned, when the kings or rulers of nations shall open their eyes to the false pretensions of their deceiver, and perform their appointed part respecting her downfall and disgrace."—*Annot.* pp. 366, 7.

This prophecy has been already fulfilled with respect to *some* of these kingdoms, which have been the great leaders in the Reformation: we may therefore look forward to a fulfilment of it with respect to the *remainder*, when they, in their turn, shall hate the whore and destroy her power: and the signs of the times appear to point to such a fulfilment. But it is important to add a valuable observation of Mr Davison with respect to these *ten kingdoms*. "Such," he observes, "was the divided state of the Western Empire, when, in the middle ages, the Papal dominion rose, and rode upon the back of the *civil* power, existing in the separate kingdoms, into which that kingdom was disparted. But no rational account can be given of this symbol of the vision, if the harlot be ancient *Pagan* Rome; for her empire, if that be *the beast*, did not, in its Pagan form, admit of, or co-exist with, a civil sovereignty in such a diversity of kingdoms. *In this point, as in others, the application of the prophetic symbols recoils from the Heathen upon the Christian power.*"—*Discourses on Prophecy*, pp. 470, 1.

There is one remark it is important to make with reference to that part of the vision of the image described in Dan. ii. relating to *the ten toes* of the *image*, which has been supposed by some to relate to that period of the Roman Empire, when the government was divided into *ten kingdoms*, which is the subject of Dan. vii. and of these prophecies of the Apocalypse. It however relates to that period of the Roman Empire, when the Christian religion first appeared in the world, as is clearly shewn by *Bishop Newton*, *Diss.* XIII.; and D'Oyly and Mant's Bible ad locum.

NOTE I. p. 258.

NOTE 1. The arguments of Vitranga may be abundantly and conclusively confirmed by the authorities, which have been referred to by Bishop Newton in his Dissertation on this chapter, and by the account which has been given by Mr Gibbon of the capture of Rome at these different periods. The siege and capture of Rome by Alaric took place A.D. 410. Notwithstanding the ravages which were committed by the barbarian troops, there appears to have been little to distinguish it from ordinary sieges; and in some respects considerable

forbearance was exercised towards the vanquished. After describing the assault and capture of the city, Mr Gibbon observes, "The proclamation of Alaric, when he forced his entrance into a vanquished city, discovered, however, some regard for the laws of humanity and religion. He encouraged his troops boldly to seize the rewards of valour, and to enrich themselves with the spoils of a wealthy and effeminate people: but he exhorted them, at the same time, to spare the lives of the unresisting citizens, and to respect the churches of the Apostles St Peter and St Paul, as holy and inviolable sanctuaries. Amidst the horrors of a nocturnal tumult, several of the Christian Goths displayed the fervour of a recent conversion; and some instances of their uncommon piety are related, and perhaps adorned, by the zeal of ecclesiastical writers." On the whole, after a review of the circumstances attending this siege, Mr Gibbon adds, "There exists in human nature a strong propensity to depreciate the advantages, and to magnify the evils, of the present times. Yet when the first emotions had subsided, and a fair estimate was made of the real damage, the more learned and judicious cotemporaries were forced to confess, that *infant Rome had formerly received more essential injury from the Gauls, than she had now sustained from the Goths in her declining age. The experience of eleven centuries has enabled posterity to produce a more singular parallel; and to affirm with confidence, that the ravages of the Barbarians, whom Alaric had led from the banks of the Danube, were less destructive than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles the Fifth, a Catholic prince, who styled himself Emperor of the Romans.*"—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. xxxi. A. D. 410.

The account of the taking of Rome by Totila is contained in chap. XLIII. The city was twice taken by Totila; the first time A. D. 548, and again in the following year. On the first occasion Totila had determined to rase the city: but Mr Gibbon observes, that "the firm and temperate remonstrance of Belisarius suspended the execution; he warned the Barbarian not to sully his fame by the destruction of those monuments, which were the glory of the dead and the delight of the living; and Totila was persuaded, by the advice of an enemy, to preserve Rome as the ornament of his kingdom, or the fairest pledge of peace and reconciliation." On the last occasion, upon the surrender of the garrison, Mr Gibbon ob-

serves, that "they retrieved their arrears of pay, and preserved their arms and horses, by enlisting in the service of Totila; *their chiefs, who pleaded a laudable attachment to their wives and children in the East, were dismissed with honour; and above four hundred enemies, who had taken refuge in the sanctuaries, were saved by the clemency of the victor. He no longer entertained a wish of destroying the edifices of Rome, which he now respected as the seat of the Gothic kingdom: the senate and people were restored to their country; the means of subsistence were liberally provided; and Totila, in the robe of peace, exhibited the equestrian games of the circus.*"

The narrative of this historian, who will certainly not be suspected of undue partiality in favour of this book, will prove conclusively, how inadequate the circumstances attending the capture of Rome at both these periods, and indeed at any other period of its history, are to fulfil the terms of this most awful and important prophecy. Indeed, as Bishop Newton has justly observed, "what reason had the Christians (compare verse 20) to rejoice over the calamities brought on Rome by Alaric or Totila; in which they themselves were the principal sufferers? And how were these calamities any vindication of their cause or the cause of true religion?" (*Dissert. ad locum*). Compare also the conclusive reasoning by which the learned Prelate has shewn that these prophecies, considered in a *temporal* point of view, have never been fulfilled in Rome. See also Woodhouse, *Annotations ad locum*.

NOTE K. p. 259.

LINE 2. With regard to the manner in which we ought to apply the splendid imagery contained in this chapter, to the destruction of the spiritual Babylon, the reader will find some judicious remarks in Woodhouse, *Annotations ad locum*. Indeed, it is impossible that on this subject there can be any material difference of opinion;—the object of this accumulation of magnificent images borrowed from the ancient prophecies, and particularly from those relating to ancient Babylon, the type of her spiritual successor, being to proclaim the final and awful destruction of this great anti-christian power. The connection between this and the prophecies of the Old

Testament, from which it is borrowed, may be best seen by a comparison of the references contained in the margin of our Bibles. But there is one passage, which was not particularly noticed in the preceding exposition, because, at that time, I was not altogether satisfied with regard to the correctness of the translation of this passage in the authorized Version. The passage to which I allude is contained in the *thirteenth* verse of chap. xviii.; where, in describing the riches of Babylon, which the merchants of the world would not buy any more, are mentioned, amongst other things, "beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and *souls of men*," (margin, *bodies*):—Gr. καὶ κτήνη καὶ πρόβατα, καὶ ἵππων, καὶ ρῆδων, καὶ σωμαμάτων, καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων. On comparing this with the parallel passage in Ezekiel (chap. xxvii. 13), where, in describing the riches of Tyre, he says, "Javan, Tubal, and Meshach, these were thy merchants: they traded *the persons of men*, and vessels of brass in thy market," &c.; a doubt arose, whether ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων ought not to be translated, as it is done in the margin of the Bible, *the bodies, or persons of men*.

Such is the obvious meaning of the word שָׁמַיִם in this passage of Ezekiel, as is evident from its meaning in other passages. Compare 1 Chron. v. 21; Numb. xxxi. 34, 40, 46, &c. The LXX. translate it οὗτοι ἐνεπορεύοντό σοι ἐν ψυχαῖς ἀνθρώπων; and the word ψυχῇ is used by them in the same manner in other passages. On these grounds Grotius, Hammond, Wolf, and others, have attributed this meaning to the word in this passage of the Apocalypse. But, in answer to this criticism, it may be observed, that this meaning is embodied in the preceding word σωμαμάτων, which is used, not only by the LXX., but by the best Greek authors, in the sense of *slaves*:—(compare Schleusn. Lex. N. T. in voce). The prophet then proceeds by a climax, or gradation, from one article to another, to point out that, which to the corrupt spiritual Babylon was a source of great wealth,—*the souls of men*.

"The enumeration of the articles of trade," as Dean Woodhouse has observed, "by which this Babylon is described as making an iniquitous profit, has something in it very peculiar and striking. Can we avoid recalling to memory the purgatory, the penances, the commutations, the indulgences, made *saleable* in the corrupt Papal church?" As the criticism contained in this passage is one of great importance, I will subjoin the observation

of two writers in Pole's Synopsis: "Probe hic notandum, quod Spiritus Sanctus, ut ostenderet, quales merces et mercatores hic intelliguntur, divino quodam artificio, clausulæ loco, ponit *animas hominum*; ac ne quisquam secundum formulam sermonis Hebraici, et similia verba Ezek. xxvii. 13 posita, existimet per has intelligi debere *mancipia*, habemus ad illa significanda præmissam vocem *σωμάτων*: deinde mutatur constructio, et *ψυχὰς* &c., id quod evidenti indicio est, intelligi hic mercatores, quales illi sunt 2 Cor. ii. 17 et 2 Pet. ii. 3. Quod ergo in sensu proprio dictum est de Tyro, Ezek. xxvii. in mystico, de hac mystica Babylone debet intelligi, de animarum mercatura per missas, indulgentias, peregrinationes, aliaque suffragia," &c.¹ Poli Synopsis ad locum; which contains a most learned and valuable criticism relative to the whole subject.

With regard to the ancient versions of this passage in the Apocalypse, the *Vulgate* has, "et rhedarum et mancipiorum, et *animarum hominum*;" the Syriac translates the passage "ܐܢܝܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܢܬܪܐ" and the bodies and souls of men; and the same appears to be the manner in which the passage is translated in the Æthiopic version. But the testimony of the first two versions, one of which has been always the standard version of the Roman Catholic church, and the other was made long before the greatest corruptions of the Romish church had an existence, appears to be conclusive with regard to the true meaning of the words,—καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων, in this passage; and to shew, that they were probably added (as is the case in many other of the most sublime Scripture prophecies, and particularly in those solemn exhortations, with which our Saviour at once concludes and points out the spiritual import of some of his most impressive parables, Matth. xxii. 13; xxv. 13, 30, &c.) for the purpose of directing the attention of Christians to the *spiritual purport* of this most awful and impressive prophecy.

¹ The following is the impressive remark of Beza on this passage: "*Animas hominum, ψύχας ἀνθρώπων*. Hæc

vero est apud illos vilissimi pretii merces, quam tamen Filius Dei sanguine suo redimendam putavit."

NOTE L. p. 259.

LINE 16. See a statement of the acute argument of Bishop Bossuet, by which he has endeavoured to avert the application of the imagery contained in this chapter from Papal Rome, and the masterly refutation of it by Bishop Hurd, in his *Warburtonian Lectures*, Sermon xi. pp. 163, &c.

NOTE M. p. 263.

LINE 5—8. *Opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, &c.*—In illustration of this, compare Bishop Newton *ad locum*, who refers, in proof of the application of this description to Papal Rome, to Jewel's *Apology and Defence*, and the *Introduction to Barrow's Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy*. The learned Prelate has quoted such passages as the following: *Our Lord God the Pope; another God upon earth; King of kings and Lord of lords. The same is the dominion of God and of the Pope. The power of the Pope is greater than all created power, and extends itself to things celestial, terrestrial, and infernal, &c.* But the *Introduction* of Dr Barrow may be referred to, as containing a most learned, copious, and temperate statement of the whole question.

NOTE N. p. 263.

LINE 26. That the early Christian Fathers identified *the Man of Sin*, as he is described by St Paul, with *Anti-Christ*; is proved at large by Bishop Newton, in his masterly *Dissertation on the Man of Sin*. "*Justin Martyr*, who flourished before the middle of the second century, considers *the Man of Sin*, or, as he elsewhere calleth him, *the Man of blasphemy*, as altogether the same with *the little horn of Daniel*; and affirms that he, who shall *speak blasphemous words against the Most High*, is now at the doors². Irenæus, who lived in the same

² Justin. *Dialog. cum Tryph.* vid. etiam, p. 336. Ed. Paris. p. 371. p. 250, Ed. Paris. p. 201 Ed. Thirb. Ed. Thirb.

century, hath written a whole chapter on the fraud, pride, and tyrannical reign of *Anti-Christ*, as they are described by Daniel and St Paul in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians¹. Origen recites this passage at large of him, who is called *Anti-Christ*². To the same purpose he likewise alleges the words of Daniel, as truly divine and prophetical. Daniel and St Paul, according to him, both prophesied of the same person. Lactantius, who flourished in the beginning of the fourth century, describes *Anti-Christ* in the same manner, and almost in the same terms, with St Paul; and concludes, *This is he who is called Anti-Christ, but shall feign himself to be Christ, and shall fight against the truth*³." *Dissert.* XXII. This testimony of Christian Fathers, who lived so long before the appearance of the real *Anti-Christ*, is surely very conclusive with regard to the opinions of the early Christian Church on this subject.

NOTE O. p. 263.

LINE 21, 22, &c. *The LET which prevented the immediate appearance of the MAN OF SIN, &c.*—That this *let* was the existence of the Imperial Roman Empire, is shewn by Bishop Newton in the same masterly Dissertation. "*Tertullian*, who became famous towards the latter end of the second century, expounding those words, *Only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way*, says, *Who can this be but the Roman state, the division of which into ten kingdoms will bring on Anti-Christ, and then shall THE WICKED ONE be revealed*⁴? And in his APOLOGY, he assigns it as a particular reason why the Christians prayed for the Roman Empire, *because they knew that the greatest calamity hanging over the world was delayed by its preservation*⁵. Cyril of Jerusalem, who lived in the fourth century, alleges this passage of St Paul together with other prophecies concerning Anti-Christ, and says that

¹ Iren. adv. Hæres. Lib. 5, cap. xxv. p. 437, Ed. Grabe.

² Contra Celsum. Lib. 6. p. 668. Opera, Tom. 1. Ed. Bened.

³ Lactant. Lib. 7. cap. xix.

⁴ De Resurrect. Carnis. cap. xxiv. p. 340. Ed. Rigalt. 1675.

⁵ "Est et alia major necessitas nobis orandi pro imperatoribus, etiam pro omni statu imperii, rebusque Romanis, quæ vim maximam universo orbi imminuentem,—Romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari." Apolog. cap. xxx.

*this the predicted Anti-Christ will come, when the times of the Roman Empire shall be fulfilled, and the consummation of the world shall approach. Ten kings of the Romans shall arise together, in different places indeed, but they shall reign at the same time. Among these the eleventh is Anti-Christ, who by magical and wicked artifice shall seize the Roman power*⁶." The learned Prelate produces also the testimony of Jerome, Augustin, and Chrysostom, to the same point.

This agreement of these early Christian Fathers, living as they did long before *the Man of Sin* made his appearance, is no less remarkable, than it is convincing: and when we find it extending almost up to the time of the Apostles themselves, it is difficult not to believe that it was derived from them; and that the reason why St Paul did not express openly the Roman Empire, was that which was stated by Jerome, because *if he had said openly and boldly, that Anti-Christ shall not come unless the Roman Empire be first destroyed, it might probably have proved the occasion of a persecution against the then rising Church*⁷. On the whole, with reference to this point, compare with this passage of St Paul, Dan. vii. 8, 20, 24; Rev. xiii. 3; xvii. 8, 10, 11: and refer to what has been said above, pp. 197—202 and 254—256. Compare also *Mede's Apostasy of the Latter Times*, Chap. xiii. *Works*, pp. 808, &c.

NOTE P. p. 265.

NOTE 2. Bishop Hurd's reference is to the edition of 1613; in that of 1687 it is p. 23. After a consideration of what Mr Maitland has said in his *First Inquiry into the period of 1260 years*, I cannot perceive that either the justice of the Bishop's quotation, or the propriety of the application of the speech of Arnulphus to Pope John, are affected by his arguments.

With regard to the subject of *Anti-Christ*, in order that these notes may not be extended to an unreasonable length, I must content myself with referring the reader to Bishop War-

⁶ Catech. 15, cap. v. p. 211. Ed. Milles. Oxon.

⁷ *Algasia. Quest. xi. Col. 209. Prior Pars. Tom. iv. Edit. Benedict.*

burton's *Sermon on the Rise of Anti-Christ*; to Bishop Hurd's *Lectures, Sermons VII. VIII. XI.*; to Dean Woodhouse's *Annotations* on these chapters; and to other works which have more particularly treated on the anti-christian character of the doctrines and practices of Papal Rome.

NOTE P. p. 233.

NOTE 4. Vitringa, in his Preface to this chapter, entitled *Anacrisis Millenarii sanctorum et martyrum regni*, (pp. 835—850,) having shewn, in a most elaborate argument, that the period of the *Millennium* cannot be referred to the early ages of Christianity, and that it can only have its accomplishment in that blessed time, which will succeed the fall of the great anti-christian apostasies and the binding of Satan, concludes in the following eloquent and impressive language with regard to the period of *one thousand years*, which is here mentioned for the *duration* of this happy time. “Quin immo,” he observes, “si REGNO CHRISTI in hisce terris danda sint feliciora aliqua et tranquilliora tempora quam Ecclesia hactenus vidit: an probabile est, minore illa circumscripta fore spatio quam *mille annorum*? Esse autem meliora tempora danda regno Christi in his terris, clamant Prophetarum oracula; suadet ratio; et hoc fere tempore concedunt omnes, qui ad res divinas intelligendas animum suum admoverunt. Estne enim probabile, Deum, qui omne opus suum perficit et consummat, non esse consummaturum regnum Filii sui in hisce terris? An regnabit Diabolus, an regnabit Bestia; et non regnabit Christus? An pugnabit Christus Jesus cum hostibus suis in hisce terris, eosque nunquam perfecte debellabit et vincet? An Ecclesia secundum præscriptum et voluntatem Domini precabitur: *Veniat REGNUM TUUM*: nunquam tamen *regnam Dei et Christi* in hisce terris suas potenter et gloriose explicabit vires? Si enim hic mundus in eum præcipue finem conditus sit et conservetur, ut tandem regnum et gloria Dei per orbem universam manifestarentur: quare hanc abjicimus spem, quam omnia prophetarum confirmant oracula? Si enim demonstrari hactenus nequeat, *Lapidem ex monte excisum totam replesse terram. Deum esse unum et nomen ejus unum per universam terram. Nomen.*

Dei esse gloriosum per totam terram. Omnem iniquitatem os suum clausisse. Impios deletos esse de terra: et quæ hujus generis multa sunt alia: Deo autem non desit potentia hæc sua promissa repræsentandi: quare amplissimam hanc spem nostram intra arcta constringamus spatia, et minus præstolamur quam Deus promisit? Utique non video, id facere ad gloriam Dei.” (p. 847). And this is followed by another passage of equal eloquence.

On this subject, as indeed on all others, the opinions of *Mede* are peculiarly valuable: but it is perhaps more especially necessary to allude to them on this question, as they have been the subject of much misrepresentation. These opinions are to be found detailed in different parts of his Works, and especially in the following passages: (1) Pp. 661—663, in his discourse *de Mille Annis Tubæ Septimæ*, &c.: (2) Pp. 710—12, in a discourse entitled *Epistola ad Amicum de Resurrectione Prima et Millenio Apocalypico*; and the substance of the opinion contained in these treatises is expressed in Chap. xi. of his *Remains on some passages of the Apocalypse*, pp. 747, 8; and in his Second Letter to *Dr Meddus*, pp. 942—5. p. 949, &c. The substance of his opinion is as follows: “That the *seventh Trumpet* and the *thousand years* contained therein is that *magnus dies Domini*, and *magnus dies Judicii*, or *dies magni Judicii*, the great day of the Lord, the great day of Judgment, the day of the great Judgment; not a day of a few hours, as we commonly suppose, but *continuatum multorum annorum intervallum*, a continued space of many years, wherein Christ shall destroy all his enemies, and at length death itself; beginning with anti-christ, by his revelation from heaven in flaming fire, and ending with the universal resurrection: during which space of time shall be the kingdom of the saints in the New Jerusalem.” (p. 748.) He believes in a literal resurrection of the martyrs; and “that these saints of the first resurrection shall reign here on earth in the New Jerusalem in a state of beatitude and glory, partaking of the divine presence and vision of Christ their king; as it were in an heaven upon earth, or new Paradise, immutable, unchangeable, &c.” “But,” he says, “we must distinguish between the state of the New Jerusalem, and the state of the nations which shall walk in the light thereof; they shall not be both one, but much differing. Therefore what is spoken particularly of the New Jerusalem, must not be applied to the whole Church which then shall be. The state of the nations which walk in her light, though happy and glorious, yet shall be changeable, as appears

by the commotion of the nations seduced at the end of the thousand years. But the state of those who dwell in the New Jerusalem shall be *extra omnem mutationis aleam*; *Blessed are those who have part in the first resurrection, for on them the second death hath no power.*" (p. 944.) Compare also pp. 949, 950.

There is however a short discourse contained in Chap. XII. of *the Remains*, (pp. 748—751,) from which it would appear, that at one time his opinion agreed, in its main features, with that of Dean Woodhouse, which has been adopted in ~~this~~ work: "The presence of Christ in this kingdom, (he observes,) shall no doubt be glorious and evident: yet I dare not so much as imagine (*which some ancients seem to have thought*) that it should be a visible converse upon earth. For the kingdom of Christ ever hath been and shall be *regnum cœlorum*; a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven. Yet we may grant he shall appear and be visibly revealed from heaven, especially for the calling and gathering of his ancient people, for whom in the days of old he did so many wonders."...Those who shall be partakers of this kingdom are described to be of two sorts: "(1) *The deceased martyrs who shall resume their bodies and reign in heaven*; (2) *Such of the living as have not worshipped the beast, &c. these shall reign upon earth.*" "*The rising of the martyrs is that which is called the first resurrection, being, as it seems, a prerogative to their sufferings above the rest of the dead; who, as they suffered with Christ in the time of his patience, so should they be glorified with him in the reign of his victory before the universal resurrection of all.*" The second resurrection to be after the end of the 1000 years, "*the eternal and universal resurrection of all together.*" This is the substance of the opinions of this learned writer. In order that full justice may be done to them, they must be examined as they are stated in his own valuable works, by which alone we can be enabled to appreciate the unparalleled learning, piety, and modesty of this admirable man.

Bishop Hall, in his Treatise entitled *The Revelation Unrevealed*, has discussed the subject of the *Millennium*, and is strongly opposed to the opinions of those persons who believe in the personal advent of Christ, and his personal reign upon earth during the *Millennium*. (*Hall's Works*, Vol. x. p. 79, &c. *Ed. Pratt.*) With regard to the opinions, which have been advanced by some persons, as to "whether the power of Satan will be entirely destroyed during the *Millennium*,

and in what way the *final apostasy* will take place, whether by the increase of iniquity towards the close of the Millennium, or by an apostasy amongst the saints themselves, such as that of Judas amongst the apostles,"—it does appear that we may leave inquiries like these to God. We have the express declarations of prophecy with respect to the great results; and this is sufficient to satisfy every humble mind: and with regard to this and every other opinion which may be advanced on this subject, we may well adopt the admirable reflections of *Bishop Hall*: "O, blessed Saviour, what strange variety of conceits do I find concerning thy thousand years' reign! What riddles are there in that prophecy which no human tongue can read! Where to fix the beginning of that marvellous millenary, and where the end, and what manner of reign it shall be—whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven, undergoes as many constructions as there are pens that have undertaken it; and yet when all is done, I see thine apostle speaks only of the *souls* of the martyrs reigning so long with thee, not of thy reigning so long on earth with those martyrs! How busy are the tongues of men,—how are their brains taken up with the indeterminable construction of this enigmatical truth, when in the mean time the care of thy spiritual reign in their hearts is neglected! O, my Saviour, while others weary themselves with the disquisition of thy personal reign here upon earth for a thousand years, let it be the whole bent and study of my soul to make sure of my personal reign with thee in heaven to all eternity!"—*Devotional Works*, Vol. II. p. 321. *Ed. Pratt.*

NOTE R. p. 316.

NOTE 6. There is little disagreement amongst the great body of commentators with regard to the application of the *seventh* chapter of Daniel to the *Papal Apostasy*: and the correctness of this application has been shewn in the preceding pages. With regard, however, to the application of the *eighth* chapter, there is greater doubt: and *Faber* maintains the application of the *little horn*, mentioned in this chapter, to *Mahomet*; and in this opinion he is followed by *Scott*, in his note ad locum; by Archdeacon Browne, (*Charge*, ut supra,) and other writers.

C C

The reasons for the adoption of this opinion are stated by Scott in his Commentary *ad locum*. I confess, however, that I cannot be persuaded to relinquish the opinion of Bishop Newton, who applies it to the *Romans*; and understands it, not merely of the persecutions and cruelty which the *Jews* experienced at their hands, but of the persecutions which the Christians experienced from *Rome*, both in its *Pagan* state, and under the dominion of the *Papal* power. For he observes, that "as the power of Roman Emperors declined, that of the Roman Pontiffs increased; and may it not with equal truth and justice be said of the latter as of the former, that they *cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered*? The persecuting power of Rome, whether exercised towards the Jews, or the Christians, or by the Emperors, or by the Popes, is still *the little horn*." There is also another remark which appears to me to fix the application of this prophecy to Rome, and which is quoted by *Bishop Newton* from *Sir Isaac Newton*, (*Observations on Daniel*, Chap. ix. pp. 119, 120); "that this horn, though little at first, yet *waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the pleasant land. This horn, therefore,*" as *Sir Isaac Newton* justly observes, "*was to rise up in the north-west parts of those nations which composed the body of the goat; and from thence was to extend his dominion towards Egypt, Syria, and Judea*." This argument appears to me conclusively to fix this prophecy to *Rome*.

The argument of Bishop Newton is incapable of abridgement, and may be seen in his *Dissertation* on this Chapter, (Diss. xv.); in which he has also shewn that this prophecy is inapplicable in any way to Antiochus; to whom it has been applied by some commentators *directly*, and by others in a *primary* sense, as by Mr W. Lowth, with an *ultimate* reference to *Anti-christ*. (See Bishop Newton's *Dissertation*, and the notes which are extracted from it in D'Oyly and Mant's Bible *ad locum*.) But that it is inapplicable to *him* is evident, both from the terms of the prophecy itself, and also from the *prophetical* period of 2300 days, which is appointed for *the cleansing of the sanctuary*, which evidently has reference to a *very distant* period.

With respect to the prophecy contained in the *eleventh* chapter, there is little disagreement amongst the commentators, in the interpretation of the first part to the end of the *thirtieth* verse. From this verse to the *fortieth*, the *Roman* power is

evidently the subject, and particularly that *anti-christian* power which came into existence after the *temporal* power of Rome was destroyed; as is evident from the description which is given of him, as *magnifying himself above every God; his not regarding the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor any god; but honouring Mahuzzim, &c.*; characters which are expressly attributed to the *Man of Sin* by St Paul. "There can be no doubt," as Mr Scott has judiciously observed, "that any one who carefully compares the concluding part of this chapter, and the next chapter, with the other Scriptures; who accurately examines the import of the words employed; and who attentively considers the records of history; that the *fourth kingdom*, even that of the Romans, is predicted, if not *exclusively*, yet *principally*. First, Rome *Pagan*, then Rome *Christian*, and then Rome *Papal*, must be intended: for no other power which has hitherto appeared on earth, at all answers to the description here given, or has had dominion during so long a term of time, as the angel plainly marks out¹."

The events foretold in the remainder of the chapter, and in the beginning of the following chapter, evidently relate to a *very distant* period; and may, as has been observed, relate to the events, which are described Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix; Isai. lxvi; Joel iii. 2. 9—16; Zech. xiv. &c. (Vid. supra, pp. 35—38); Rev. xiv. 14—20; xvi; xix. 11—21, as introducing the Millennium. Indeed, this is the period which is expressly pointed out by the angel in the *seventh* verse of the following chapter, when, upon Daniel enquiring *how long it should be to the end of these wonders*, he answers, *that it should be until time, and times, and half a time*. The events, therefore, which are predicted between the beginning of the *eleventh* chapter, and the *seventh* verse of the *twelfth* chapter, extend from the beginning of the Persian Empire to the Millennium.

There are two other periods mentioned in the *twelfth* chapter; the first of 1290, the second of 1335 *days*; of which the first period is to be calculated from "*the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up*," ver. 11. "These 1290 days," Scott observes, "must be calculated from the same time, as a time,

¹ With regard to the prophecy contained in Dan. xi. 36—39, see also Mede's *Apostasy of the Latter Times*, Chap. xvi. xvii. *Works*, pp. 820—831.

and times, and half a time, or 1260 years; and they reach to thirty years beyond them. The subversion of the Papal Antichrist, and the destruction of the seat of the Beast and of the Mahommedan delusion (Rev. xviii. xix.), will probably be at the end of the 1260 years; thirty years more may be taken up in wholly extirpating every anti-christian power; and the last number of 1335 years, which reaches forty-five years beyond this time, may predict the complete introduction of the Millennium, when "the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" and happy will they be who wait and live to see that time. Daniel, having received this information, was directed to prepare for death and rest in heaven; for he would stand in his lot as a glorified saint, to witness the accomplishment of these predictions." With the time of the end, or the close of the 1260 days, mentioned in this chapter, coincides the close of the 2300 days mentioned in chap. viii. 14.

I confess, therefore, that a review of all these circumstances, and especially the comparison of chap. xii. 11, with chap. viii. 11, 12, tends to confirm the opinion, that by the *little horn* in chap. viii. we are to understand the Papal power¹. However, whether we understand it of *Mahomet* or of the *Papal* power, it exhibits an extraordinary chain of prophecy. But more especially, if we consider these chapters of Daniel as relating to Papal Rome, and view them in connection with the subsequent prophecies of St Paul and St John in the Apocalypse, it must increase the feelings of awe with which we contemplate the prophecies connected with this great corruption of Christianity. Bishop Newton, after a review of the prophecy contained in these two chapters, makes the following fine remark: "Upon the whole," he observes, "what an amazing prophecy is this, comprehending so many various events, and extending through many successive ages, from the first establishment of the Persian Empire,

¹ This appears to be further confirmed by a comparison of Dan. viii. 12, with Rev. xiii. 5; in which latter passage the Papal power, we know, is pointed out. In Dan. viii. 12, it is said of the *little horn*, יַעֲשֶׂה רַע וְהִצְלִיחַ לְעַצְמוֹ LXX. καὶ ἐποίησε, καὶ ἐβλάστη, and it practised and prospered. It is said

of the same power in ver. 24, יַעֲשֶׂה רַע וְהִצְלִיחַ לְעַצְמוֹ LXX. καὶ ποιήσει ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ κατασχύσει, and shall deal against them and shall prevail. Compare Dan. xi. 7, 28, 36; and see Vitringa ad locum, p. 662; and Bishop Newton, *Dissertation* xv.

above 530 years before Christ, to the general resurrection!" How much *more* amazing then is it, when it is viewed in connection with the corresponding prophecies of the Old Testament, and with those of St Paul and St John in the Apocalypse, relating to the same great and awful consummation! With respect to the prophecies contained in these chapters of Daniel, consult *The Dissertations of Bishop Newton*; Faber, Hales, and the Commentaries of Mr W. Lowth; and those contained in D'Oyly and Mant, and Scott's Bibles; the last of which contains a very copious and elaborate view of all the different opinions connected with this important subject.

NOTE S. p. 339.

LINE 32. Le Clerc and Whitby, from a mistaken idea that the *Man of Sin*, who is described as sitting in *the temple of God*, was to shew himself in *Judea*, on this circumstance built their opinion, that the revolt of the Jews from the Romans is the *apostasy* here spoken of; and that the factious leaders are represented by the *Man of Sin*. But see a refutation of this opinion by Macknight on 2 Thess. ii. 4.

NOTE T. p. 340.

NOTE 2. A comparison has been instituted above, pp. 196—199, between the *little horn* described in Dan. vii. and the *beast* described Rev. xiii. 1—10; and again, between the *Man of Sin*, described by St Paul, and Rev. xiii. xvii. in pp. 262—264: and the subject is renewed in chap. vi. pp. 369, &c., in which place a comparative view of these prophecies is exhibited: and in Macknight's note on 2 Thess. ii. 3 may be found a comparison of the prophecies of Daniel and St Paul. I will conclude this note with an extract from *Davison's Warburtonian Lectures*, in his Discourse on *the Proof of the Inspiration of Prophecy contained in the Prediction of the great Apostasy*; in which he draws the following masterly parallel between the *Man of Sin*, as he is described by St Paul, and the apocalyptic vision of St John:

"So far the character and lineaments of this Christian Apostate Power have been traced in the Apocalyptic vision of

St John. To extend the prophetic subject, we must include in it the prophecy of St Paul. This Apostle, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, furnishes other points of description, whereby to designate the internal enemy of the Christian Church. He announces some great apostasy to take place, and *the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition*, who has his time in a future age to be revealed, *opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, sitting in the temple of God, and shewing himself that he is God*. His coming is to have these marks upon it; it is to be *after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*¹.

"The identity of the subject in this prophecy of St Paul with that in the Apocalypse, is the main point to be established, in order to the validity of the argument to be deduced from them combined together. The text of neither supplies sufficient data, from the mere force of the terms, to prove that connexion. *The Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition*, cannot be immediately assumed to be the same with the Harlot Mother, or to belong to one and the same period, or local seat, of corruption. Some data, however, there are, approximating the two prophecies. *The Man of Sin sits in the temple of God*, and 'the mother of fornications is the inmate corruptress of the Christian Church.' There are *signs and lying wonders* in the one: there are successful *sorceries* in the other. *The mystery of iniquity* is St Paul's great object²; St John's iconism is, in its essential idea, of some *mystery*; some strange system of iniquity, differing from the common simple operation of human error, or wickedness, in its more natural form. Moreover, the scale of St Paul's prophecy seems to have something of the extent and magnitude of St John's. For the apostasy which St Paul describes is of such proportions, in the history of the Christian Church, as to make it a fit chronological index of the remoteness of the day of the resurrection. The two subjects, therefore, having so far an agreement or a capacity of agreement, in their general form, may probably be coincident the one to the other.

"It is the event, however, which I appeal to, as the medium of proof whereby to verify this agreement. The hierarchy of Rome has in its day fulfilled every iota of St Paul's prophetic

¹ Chap. ii. 3—12.

² Chap. ii. 7.

description. The claims of infallibility which the Roman See has arrogated to itself; the demand of an implicit faith in its doctrines, those doctrines many of them the most contradictory to Christianity; the tyranny of its tribunals over the consciences of men; the blasphemous titles of address and impious homage which its Pontiff has heretofore extorted or accepted; the dominion over other Churches which it has assumed; assumed without justice, and exercised without reason or mercy; perfectly agree with the pride of that rival enemy of God seated in *God's temple* figured out by the Apostle. For these inordinate pretensions are all of them, in the strictest sense, invasions of the honour and supreme rights of God, due to him alone, or to the authority of his inspired word. Romish Infallibility disputing precedence with his authentic Truth; traditions disfiguring his attributes and his worship; a servility and prostration of the conscience to man, dethroning God from his dominion over the believer's understanding;—these are the usurpations of the Roman Hierarchy, concentrated in its Head, which fall nothing short of the character of that Man of Sin, *who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*, either God, or Jesus Christ his Son; *so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, making a shew of himself that he is God*; a character which might have defied credibility, had it not been as truly verified, as accurately foretold.

“Again, the multiplied delusions of the Romish system of debased Christianity, and its machinery of pious frauds, pretended prophecies, and miracles, have corresponded but too correctly with the second member of St Paul's prophetic delineation. For such an usurpation of tyranny, such a change of the Christian faith, could not be supported and conducted, without the instruments of a suitable policy. These instruments were taken from the only forge which could supply them. *‘They were to be after the workings of Satan (who is the father of falsehood) with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness.’* Nor is it easy to see what other words could more faithfully describe the practices and arts which have made the chief resources of the Papal power. Its legends, its relics, its meritorious pilgrimages, its indulgences, its dispensations, its liturgy in an unknown tongue, its images, its spurious miracles, its mediator-saints, its purgatory, and others its plausible, or its revolting,

superstitions, were set up as much against the genius of the Gospel, which teaches the worship of God, in *spirit* and in *truth*, in the faith of '*one Mediator*,' as against the moral honesty and godly sincerity which are the glory of the Christian ethics. And these delusions have been the work of a See and Priesthood, which having made a kind of religion too corrupt to bear the light of Scripture, and too incredible to be examined by reason, have, with sufficient consistency, prohibited, or discouraged, the use of the one and the other, and obtruded the phantom of their own infallibility, in the very height of *its* errors and abuses, as the substitute of compensation for both. This '*Mystery of iniquity*' '*in the temple of God*' had its reign. If Christian faith was well nigh extinguished by it, the truth of Christian prophecy has thereby been the more illustrated."—*Davison's Lectures on Prophecy*, pp. 422, &c.

NOTE U. p. 370.

LINE 26. Dean Woodhouse observes with respect to these *three* kingdoms, that "it is remarkable, that the three horns rooted up, the three kingdoms destroyed by the *little horn*, though represented by Daniel, are not at all noticed in the vision seen by St John:" and then says, that "this part of the prophecy of Daniel appears to him to be of difficult solution. The three kingdoms, which by modern expositors are assigned for the purpose, the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome, (Bishop Newton, &c.) taken all together, make so petty a territory, that they seem to compose only a part of *one* of those ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided." *Annotations*, p. 418. Mr Faber explains them with more probability of the *Heruli*, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and the kingdom of the Lombards; and in this opinion Mr Scott acquiesces. Compare also Mede, *Works*, p. 816.

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